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DRAGON

FIRST ISSUE D&D 3.5

WAR

- Beasts of the **BATTLEFIELD**
- Real-World **TACTICS**
- Sun Tzu's D&D **STRATEGIES**

15 TIPS TO **SPEED UP COMBAT**

COVER STORY

GITHYANKI INVADE Your Game

ARCANE ARMAGEDDON
21 WAR-SCALE SPELLS

PAGE 62

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GAME ROOM

6 **Wyrm's Turn**
Senior Editor Matthew Sernett takes a turn at the wheel.

8 **Scale Mail**
Dragon readers go toe-to-toe with Gary Gygax and a ghastly hill giant.

ON THE COVER

Wayne Reynolds serves up a triple treat with the covers of *Dragon*, *Dungeon*, and *Polyhedron*. All three cover images appear in the "Incursion" section of this issue and appear together as one image in *Dungeon*'s "Editorial Retrospective" from its 100th issue.

FEATURES

14 **3.5 Update**
Convert your character the quick and easy way with Ed Stark's guide to the 3.5 character sheet.

22 **A Brief History of War**
From bone clubs to bullet holes, *Dragon* takes you through time to view the evolution of tactics.

24 **Beasts of the Battlefield**
The "military machine" is more than a metaphor, it can smash you dead.

34 **Shut Up and Roll!**
Fifteen ways to speed up combat

38 **The Art of D&D**
He's been dead for more than 2,000 years, but Sun Tzu can still kick your ass. Learn D&D strategies from the master.

44 **Arcane Lore: War Spells**
Blast battlefields and enspell armies with war-scale spells for characters of all levels.

52 **Paragons of War**
D&D's most war-like race takes the spotlight in the ecology of the hobgoblin.

62 **New Martial Arts Styles**
A how-to guide to creating martial arts styles

DRAGON® CONTENTS

Issue 309 · July 2003 Vol. XXVIII · Number 1

INCURSION

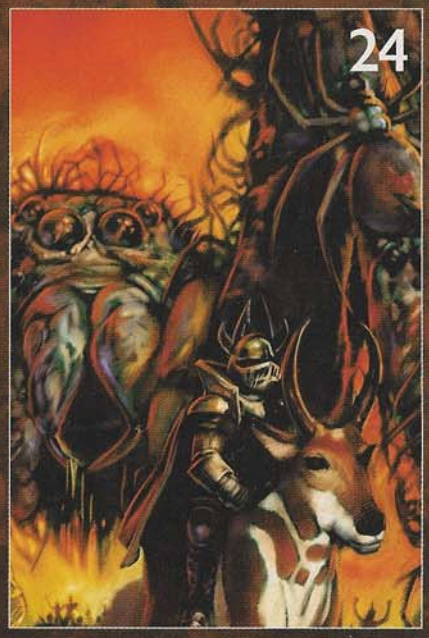
70 A World Under Seige
The githyanki are invading your game. Learn the lich-queen's plan.

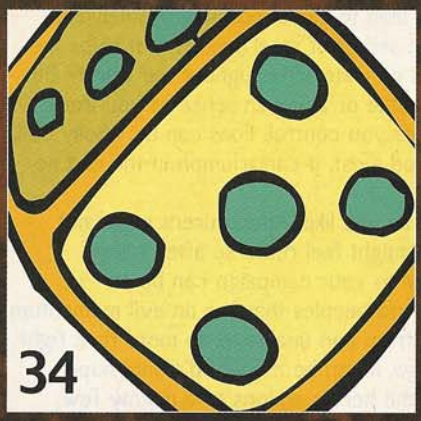
80 The Incursion Begins
Troubles that first come as single scouts soon return as full battalions. See what trouble your low-level characters can get into.

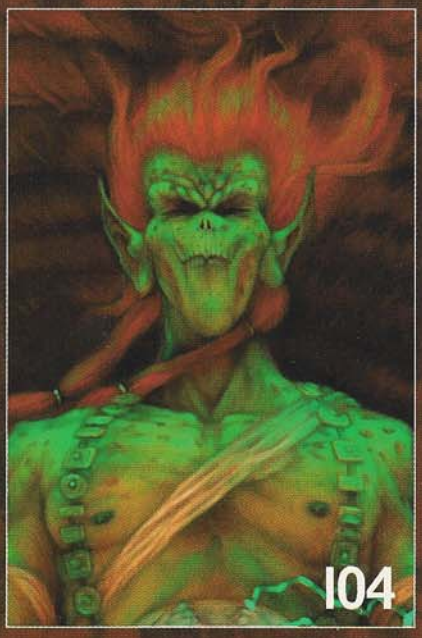
88 On the March
Dragon-riding githyanki and flying ships of astral steel flood the skies. Check out what you need to know for mid-level play in the "Incursion" campaign.

96 The Beginning of the End
The fate of the world hinges on your high-level characters' actions. Learn how to use what time you have left well.

104 Fighting the Githyanki
Tactics, feats, and magic to help you defend your world.







WIZARDS' WORKSHOP

113 Advertiser Index

114 What's New

TO RETURN NEXT MONTH . . .
Dork Tower
DM's Toolbox
Dungeoncraft
Nodwick
The Play's the Thing
Sage Advice

DUNGEON HITS 100

If you haven't done so already, pick up a copy of *Dungeon* #100 this month and check out its great content. In addition to a retrospective by past editors and a look back at the great cover art over the years, it has a sequel to the cover-adventure of issue #1 and companion content to *Dragon*'s "Campaign Components: Incursion." If you want to get the most out of including githyanki in your campaign, you need to see the super adventure to kill the lich-queen and *Polyhedron*'s "Knights of the Lich-Queen" Mini-Game.

NEXT ISSUE: 3.5 DM SCREEN

Issue #310 of *Dragon* will feature the first 3.5 DM screen. This is a full-size, four-panel, fully functional, high-quality, Wizards-official DM screen featuring fantastic art by Wayne Reynolds, and it's exclusive to *Dragon*. If you don't already subscribe, make sure you're back in the store next month to pick up issue #310 before it's gone; it's too late to subscribe and get the issue now, and the demand will be high. If you don't want to miss great premiums like the free DVD from this issue and the DM screen in issue #310, subscribe by using one of the cards in this issue or by going to www.paizo.com. Back issue supplies will be limited.

UNDEFEATED

A new source for games invades the hobby industry this summer. *Undefeated*, the latest publication from Paizo Publishing, uncovers everything new and hot in the gaming industry and gives players the winning edge with a wealth of tips and strategies in every issue. Miniatures, trading card games, board games, and other card games all get thorough coverage in the new magazine.

Undefeated is scheduled to go on sale at hobby and game stores this July and for the first phase of its production will be a bi-monthly magazine.

WE LOVE STRONGBAD

Go to www.homestarrunner.com. After you watch the welcome, click on "toons," and go to the features section and watch the Strongbad emails. If you don't know who or what "Trogdor the Burninator" is, you're missing out.

WYRM'S TURN

FROM THE EDITOR
FOUR SCORE AND 7D6 AGO . . .

The history of the world is a history of wars, and the price for the privilege of writing that history is paid with our blood. . . . Or something like that.

My original editorial for this issue was just a tad preachy. Although I devised the theme for this issue before the terrorist attacks on the U.S. and firmly believe that the theme of war is a great topic for an issue of *Dragon*, I was concerned about producing an issue about warfare in D&D with the U.S. government's threats to invade Iraq. I worried that readers would see it as pandering or taking advantage of the situation, and I wanted to defend the choice to produce the issue despite current events. As war began and the conflict intensified, my concern increased, leading me to attempt to write an editorial that might outshine Lincoln's famous address in Gettysburg.

Then quite suddenly, the war in Iraq was more or less over.

The amateur pundits and expert talking heads in the media began talking about "sporadic, disorganized fighting" and arguing about the nuances of reconstructing Iraq's cities and government. Along with much of the world, I breathed a tentative sigh of relief. I say "tentative" and "more or less over" because no one knows what the future might hold. In the three months or so it takes for the finished version of this issue to reach stores and subscriber mailboxes, any new tragedy or terror could erupt in the Middle East or anywhere else in the world. Like it or not, war has been a constant force in the world since history has been recorded, and once I stepped down from my soapbox and pulled my head from the clouds, I realized that was part of the point of my original editorial.

The real world is crazy; humanity is unpredictable. Who could guess that the Wright brothers' flight at Kitty Hawk would lead to global positioning satellites? How could the person who first learned the secret of steel predict that ships the size of cities made of that metal would float on waters throughout the world? But in your D&D game, the world can make as little or as much sense as you like. Predictability and consequences are elements you control. Foes can be wholly evil, wars can be just, and not only can pure good exist, it can triumph in the end no matter what.

Your game can be as idyllic or as murky as you like. Adventurers might not hesitate to shed blood for virtue, or heroes might feel remorse after killing remorseless villains. The introduction of war to your campaign can be an incomprehensible horror released on two good peoples that has an evil momentum all its own, with the PCs awash in the maelstrom and unable to do more than fight for survival. Or, like in *The Lord of the Rings*, it can be the world's only hope against a coming darkness, a backdrop for the heroic actions of a mighty few against a terrible evil.

Like any other element of real-world history, war is a tool that DMs can use to make adventures exciting, interesting, thought provoking, and fun. That was the reason I wanted to do an issue with a war theme: to provide DMs and players with the tools and inspiration to make great games. I hope that as you read through this issue you find that we did that.

Matthew Sernett

Senior Editor

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DM SCREEN
That's right—next issue includes a complete DM screen. This exclusive 4-panel screen is fully compatible with the revised third edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game.

THE WARRIOR CLASSES
Barbarians, Fighters, Rangers, Monks, and Rogues
Special Update Series: #1 of 3
This issue starts a 3-issue series designed to help you build the characters and games you want. Each issue focuses on making a group of related classes more customizable. This issue, the warrior classes get innovative new options.

Barbarians
Master the changes to the 3.5 barbarian with intriguing class combos, alternate rage abilities, barbarian-only feats, and other innovative options. In addition to these exciting new game mechanics, the article features advice for playing barbarian characters that are sure to fuel your inner rage.

Fighters
The most versatile weapon masters in the D&D game get even more options with new customized versions of the fighter class. These new concepts will challenge the way you think about D&D classes and show you how to choose the right options for your character or campaign.

Monks
The Monk class in the *Player's Handbook* represents only one of the many fighting styles open to players. A new, customizable version of the class opens up multiple fighting techniques and new roleplaying opportunities. Plus new monk prestige classes!

Rangers
One of the most heavily revised classes in the D&D 3.5, the ranger has more potential to be a versatile and customizable character class than ever before. These options and class combos explore the versatility of the revised ranger and give you more ways to build interesting ranger characters.

Rogues
Get a new take on the most skilled class in D&D. Alternate sneak attack abilities, customizable rogue options, and intriguing roleplaying advice give you all the tools you need to change the rogue class to suit your campaign.

PLUS
Mike Stackpole Fiction, player advice, "Dungeoncraft", "Dork Tower," and more.

SCALE **MAIL**

READERS TALK BACK
MONSTERS WIN, GYGAX LOSES

Monster Mash

I thought that the article on monster spells in *DRAGON* #304 was great. If I've ever seen anything in the magazine that should wind up in the core rules, this is it. The spells are probably too late for inclusion in 3.5, but these would make a great "official" addition to the game. Please forward this to whomever at Wizards of the Coast would need a bribe or arm twisting to get these into a main product!

Richard D. Bergstresser Jr.
Virginia Beach, VA

But we are official! It even says so on the cover.

Seriously though, thanks for the compliment, but kudos should go to the author. The great article you mention was written by James Wyatt, Wizards of the Coast D&D super-designer and author of Oriental Adventures *(among many other products). James has another great contribution to* DRAGON *and D&D in general in this issue: "Campaign Components: Incursion." To see more of his recent work, check out his "Knights of the Lich-Queen" in the* POLYHEDRON *section of* DUNGEON *#100.*

Matthew Sernett
Senior Editor

Ghastly Results

The ghastly hill giant from *DRAGON* #307 looked like such a great monster that I sent one against my 7th-level group.

Long story short, it wiped the floor with them.

I blinked and double-checked the creature's CR. Yep, 9, which for a 7th-level party is supposed to be a challenging encounter with the possibility of a fatality. Out of curiosity, I asked my group to set up and run through the encounter again. Same result. Later that night, I ran the encounter again and again using both my group's PC stats and a group of iconic PCs. The only situations in which any group lower than 9th-level defeated the ghastly hill giant were if I allowed the group to prepare specifically for the creature, or if I deliberately set the encounter up at long range (thus giving archers and spellcasters a chance to bombard the hapless undead). In every other case, the ghastly hill giant simply chewed through the PCs.

It's often said that setting monster CRs is more an art than a science, but was any playtesting done for the ghastly hill giant?

Jeff Wilder
San Francisco, CA

Well, if you consider this monster facing a 9th-level party, it's pretty clear it can't stand up to them for long. A fireball, searing light, *a hit with a sword, and a couple of arrows, and it's easily possible that the 9th-level party can leave the room without a scratch. But we should consider your situation too. Let's say that with the ghastly hill giant's feeble +1 initiative, everyone in the 7th-level party beats him except the cleric. On the first round, the rogue fires an arrow, the wizard casts* fireball, *and the fighter charges up to hit it with a +1* bastard sword. *The fighter makes his Fortitude save against the stench with a roll of 11. Both PCs are likely to hit even if the fighter uses Power Attack for 2, and the ghastly hill giant likely fails his Reflex save against the* fireball. *Assuming average damage, this leaves the poor ghastly hill giant with a mere 36 hit points, and it's stuck in melee with the fighter because it's not bright enough to ignore him and charge the wizard. The hill giant wacks the fighter with both claws and a bite, dealing a total of 30 points of damage. This isn't nearly enough to kill the fighter, but the second claw paralyzes him. Then the cleric goes. Realizing that such a large undead is likely beyond his turning ability, he casts* searing light, *a useful spell in any fight. Dealing average damage, it takes the ghastly hill giant down to 6 hit points. On the second round, an arrow from the rogue and a* magic missile *from the*

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DUNGEON #101

Prison of the Firebringer
By Richard Baker
An ancient slaad lord has waited for his freedom for centuries, and members of a new cult have dedicated themselves to freeing the powerful creature and allowing it to unleash its fury on the land. A D&D FORGOTTEN REALMS adventure for 13th-level PCs.

Special Dungeon Subscriber Section!

The Chasm Bridge
By Desmond P. Varady
Revised by Chris Thomasson
A *DUNGEON* classic appears in the magazine for the first time. This module originally appeared as a special section in *Dragon Magazine* #131. Now updated for Revised 3rd Edition, your players can relive this great adventure.

A wizard living in the Underdark seeks to extort tolls from travelers seeking passage through his territory. The PCs must deal with the greedy spellcaster and stop his tyranny if they wish to pass. A D&D adventure for 6th-level PCs.

Plus a new Map of Mystery and more!

Iron Lords of Jupiter
A d20 Modern Mini-Game of Planetary Adventure
By Lizard
"I had considered myself prepared for anything. I had one degree in Engineering and another in Astrophysics. I had completed my emergency training with honors, and I could disassemble and reassemble any one of *Minerva's* systems blindfolded, or so I liked to think. Yet, in the end, the reason I am alive today is that I allowed myself the indulgence of keeping my hobby of fencing."
Personal journal of Alicia Vanderveck, October 10, 2092

POLYHEDRON #159

wizard put the ghastly hill giant out of its misery. It was a rough but short fight, and the party had better hope the cleric prepared remove paralysis, *or they'll have a tough time fighting off the monsters who were attracted by the sound of the combat. A few poor rolls or poor choices could have made the fight longer and more dangerous, but it's certainly not beyond the party's abilities. I bet your trouble had more to do with luck than with the monster's CR. Sometimes the coin comes up tails ten times in a row.*

Matthew Sernett

Gygax = Wrong

I like reading Gary Gygax's old-school ruminations in "Up on a Soapbox." They remind me of games I enjoyed in the early '80s. However, Gary's frequent references to DMs "winning" or achieving "victories" by cleverly killing off PCs have prompted me to offer some criticism.

Gary's article in issue #307, "The Devious DM," was particularly illustrative of a destructive DM attitude. He implies that roleplaying is a competition between players and DMs, as indicated by quotes like, "Don't push the DM too far" and "a determined DM can top whatever [the characters] have to put on the table." Of course he can! Is it a mark of good roleplaying when a DM, the person who dictates the entire contents of a character's roleplaying universe, is able to "win" such a contest?

I vigorously object to Gary's regard for and amusement over this adversarial relationship. Roleplaying is about a shared fantasy—an exercise in communal storytelling, which is admittedly both tempered and energized by the threat of character mortality. The DM's job is to enjoy himself, while ensuring the players also have fun and encounter exciting, dangerous, and character-building (meant in both senses) challenges.

Winning or losing are heretical concepts to RPGs. Dying a saga-worthy death in-character, for example, is as much a victory as is anything in roleplaying.

Recently, my halfling monk double-20'd a beholder with a shuriken, slicing off an eyestalk. He was subsequently turned to stone by the bobbing eyeball, but it was worth it. Another time, my party was frustrated and stalled out in a lengthy combat against an evil sorcerer who was working behind a force field. The halfling again stepped up and reached an arm through the force field to snatch away the sorcerer's prized spell component, a severed bicorn horn. He failed a saving throw and was reduced to chum by the magic field, which had an extreme prejudice against organics. Far from being upset, I thought it was hysterical to watch the other players' jaws drop in shock and dismay.

The DM in those games presented challenges that were tough and fair. I knew, while taking both actions, that I might be in way over my head. We both made dice rolls and what happened . . . happened. To my DM's credit, there wasn't even a hint of a self-satisfied smirk on his face when I was disintegrated, and there was no frown of frustration when I beat all odds by rolling "halfling" on the *reincarnate* chart.

In D&D, everyone wins when the players and the DM alike are engaged in and excited by the game. Everyone loses when DMs take player success as a personal insult and tailor scenarios to exploit player-specific tactics or weaknesses.

P.S. Despite an apparent death wish, my halfling is still plugging along at 12th level, thank you, although he did offer himself as bait for a T-rex hunt the other night.

Doc Holaday
Muncie, IN

Power Failure

The power play on page 108-109 of issue #307 uses a flawed interpretation of *feather fall.* It relies on casting *feather fall* on oneself, then *dimension door.* You cannot cast *feather fall* on yourself if you are not falling, the target is "any free-falling objects or creatures."

Rob Harper
Address Withheld

Um yeah. We um . . . we meant to explain that. You're right about the explanation of feather fall *being wrong, and it doesn't even work if you cast* dimension door *first, because that spell prohibits you from taking any further actions after casting it in a round. If you want to pull this trick off, you'll need a* ring of feather falling.

Jesse Decker

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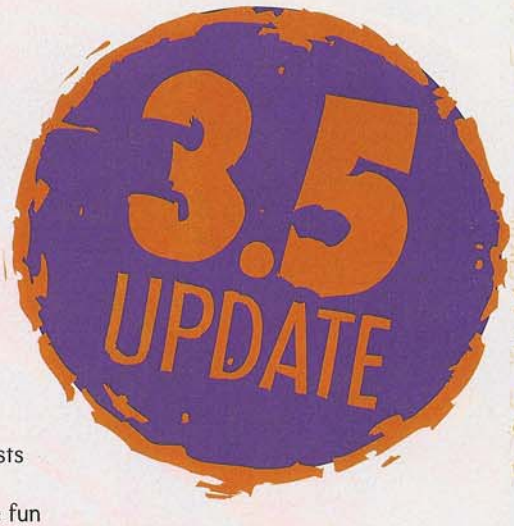
CLOSE UP: CHARACTER CONVERSIONS



by Ed Stark

Every good D&D game starts with interesting characters—PCs or NPCs—so let's take a look at the updated character sheet in the back of the revised *Player's Handbook*. We've reproduced it on page 21 to help guide you through the changes, but this isn't just a tour of the character sheet. Rather, we'll go through several sections of the character sheet and use them as examples of changes in the 3.5 rulebooks that you might need to take into account when updating your PCs, NPCs, or even monsters to version 3.5. Once you've done that, you'll know a lot more about the changes we've made to the D&D game, and you'll be ready to play.

1. Character Overview

The character overview points to a few small but important changes. Take a look at the "Class and Level" entry with an eye toward "Race." The most overt change we've made that could affect this section has to do with favored classes. One race changed its favored class, most races had abilities clarified, and a few gained the weapon familiarity ability described in issue #304's revision update.

2. Ability Scores

We didn't really change anything in the ability score section, except a few examples. One thing you will want to note, however, is that many spells and magic items that affect ability scores (such as *bull's strength* or *gloves of Dexterity*) have undergone revision. If you've been depending on the *bull's strength* spell to increase your Strength every adventure, you'll want to check out its new duration. Instead of having it last essentially all day, it now lasts for one good fight.

No, we're not trying to take the fun out of the game. Rather, we're trying to put more in. Instead of turning clerics and wizards into ability batteries for the rest of the party and driving all but the most powerful ability-enhancing items out of the game, we chose to make the ability-enhancing spells a little more powerful (they're now set at a static +4) but last a whole lot less time (1 minute per level instead of 1 hour per level). We know a lot of people won't appreciate this change, but it makes the game a little more balanced and brings back the value of those items.

3. Combat Summary

This is another section that didn't need much changing. Oh, you'll find plenty to review in the revised combat chapter—like rules for combat maneuvers and attacks of opportunity that make more sense—but you'll also find that a lot stayed the same. We have broken the armor bonus into two parts, however. Now you can have an armor bonus and a shield bonus, and they stack.

In addition, several spells that affect Armor Class have been changed and clarified. The *shield* spell, for example, got improved. It now only provides a +4 AC bonus instead of +7 (it still blocks *magic missiles*), but it covers you all the way around. You don't have to try to keep track of which half of the battlefield the magic applies to, and it isn't as overwhelming an AC boost as it once was.

You should also notice that we've now included spaces for flat-footed and touch ACs, and for your character's grapple bonus and modifiers. We've also included these in the *Monster Manual*, making the DM's life a little easier.

4. Weapon and Attack Summaries

Depending on your character's choice of weapons and attacks, you'll want to go over this section closely. After all, you wouldn't want to miss a modifier anywhere. Some of the things you'll want to review include:

Weapon Size: In 3.0, Small characters were handicapped by a restricted weapon list. Now, any character of any size can use nearly any type of weapon. The updated *Player's Handbook* provides rules for weapons for Small and Medium creatures, and the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and the *Monster Manual* provide easy rules for handling weapons for creatures of other sizes. In the revised rules, creatures all face a small penalty if they attack with a weapon made for a creature of a different size.

Flurry of Blows. This popular ability got slightly better and much easier to understand.

Ammo is Important. With the new damage reduction rules, you'll find plenty of ways to use those ammunition lines under each attack choice. Remember, purchasing a few magic, a few cold iron, a few adamantine, and a few silvered arrows is a lot cheaper than going out and upgrading a single weapon.

5. Skills

Based on your feedback, we've ironed a few bugs out of the skills system.

Some skills went away or were folded into other skills or class abilities. If you had ranks in Animal Empathy (now the province of rangers and druids), Innuendo (see "Sense Motive"), Intuit Direction (under "Survival"), Read Lips (mostly "Spot," but you might use "Sense Motive" in some cases), Scry (it was a spell, and is a spell, and forcing you to take skill ranks didn't seem right), or Speak Language (still there, but not really a skill anymore), you might want to consider reassigning them. Those hints should help.

Some were renamed. Alchemy became Craft (alchemy); Pick Pocket became Sleight of Hand. Wilderness Lore was always confused with a Knowledge choice, so now it's Survival and covers more ground.

Some skills just work a little differently. Perform doesn't force you to list a new method every time you pick up a rank. Knowledge skills are a little more stratified, but you can see some of the direct benefits if you review the list of "monster lore" applications.

There are no more exclusive skills. If you want to spend skill points on a skill, go ahead. You still need magic to use Craft (alchemy) effectively, and rogues don't have to worry about competition from fighters over Use Magic Device since you need a lot of ranks in that skill to make things work, but D&D is about options, not restrictions; now, the gloves are off.

You should definitely review the skill descriptions in the *Player's Handbook* and skill use in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (if you're a DM). We've expanded the descriptions and many of the DC tables, and we've tried to balance the skills and character skill lists so that you can now do more with any particular skill than before, not less. We've tried to generalize some skills a little bit, making your skill choices have more of an impact on the game.

6. Armor

Armor works pretty much the same as always, but remember that dwarves now have a bit of an advantage in medium or heavy armor.

We've also clarified more of the bonus types and added a few. This should make stacking questions easier to answer but shouldn't have more effect than that. There shouldn't be too many surprises in this particular area, but if any of your items in this category utilize spells, you should check over the revised spell descriptions.

REVISION TIP #1

When you update your characters to 3.5, remember that the object of the game is to have fun. If you were playing a gnome illusionist with levels in a couple of other classes and you're now ticked off because you'll have to start accruing an XP penalty because we changed the gnome's favored class to bard, have a quick chat with your DM. I suggest that your DM let you "grandfather in" that favored class. Just check with your DM and show her this tip.

7. Other Possessions

This is a very broad category, and the changes are too diverse to list individually, but some general comments should help you find the changes most important to your group or character.

Magic Items: We made a lot of changes to individual magic item descriptions. Some had to do with durations of spells. Some spells work fine at short durations, but when you put them into a permanent magic item, they get too powerful or too expensive. In general, we tried to keep the cost the same and change the abilities of the item. So, your *carpet of flying* might be a little different than you remember, but it should still work for your game. Consider any magic item a possible source for revision, so spend a few minutes looking them up.

Scrolls and Potions: A quick check of the *Player's Handbook* should tell you which spells received revision, so you can look these up fairly quickly. Some of these items might no longer be what you were looking for in a scroll or potion or other spell completion item; check with your DM about trade-ins (see Revision Tip #3) if that's the case.

Check Weights and Measures: We didn't change most of the items, but a few items weigh a little bit more or a little bit less than they did. Small and Large creatures are much more likely to find that their equipment changed than a Medium character is.

REVISION TIP #2

Don't hesitate to reallocate those skill points, but review which skills do what. This article should put you on the right track, but remember, you might need to revise skill lists and skill requirements if you're using a prestige class or even a base class from a d20 or non-core D&D product. It shouldn't be that difficult; if a class once had (for example) Alchemy as a class skill or requirement, it should now have Craft (alchemy). If it once needed Read Lips, it probably requires Spot or, perhaps, Sense Motive.

8. Feats

Feats were another new addition to the D&D game when 3.0 came out. They've been an enormously popular system, and we've had a hard time keeping up with the demand for new feats. Still, playtesting and extensive feedback allowed us to expand the list of feats available in the *Player's Handbook* and to revise a few of the ones in the original 3.0 version.

Simply compare your list of feats to the list in the book and see if things work the same way. Most feats either work exactly the same or got a little bit better. The Endurance feat, for example, was considered underpowered. Now, it gives some characters (particularly those who would be interested in the feat in the first place) the ability to sleep in medium armor without suffering fatigue the next day.

If you're using feats out of other books, you might see those feats revised or reprinted here. If we revised a feat and put it in the *Player's Handbook*, it's because we decided it was good for the core rulebooks and perhaps needed some updating. I strongly recommend you use the new version of the feat. Likewise, you'll notice that a few feats received a little "ratcheting down." Spell Focus was one of these. Taken by itself, a +2 bonus to the saving throw DCs of a particular school made sense, but when combined with all the various prestige classes and other feats out there that overlapped the effect, it was just too powerful a feat. Now it's good, but not broken.

9. Special Abilities

Almost every class and race had at least one ability that changed in one way or another. As with the races sec-

REVISION TIP #3

Magic items are a large part of any player character or NPC, and even some monsters. If we've made changes to a magic item, we did it because we received feedback or saw evidence that there was a problem with it. Try using the revised rules, and see if they make your game better. As always, it's your game; do what you feel is best.

One additional note on pricing: We tried to keep prices for magic items the same when we could, even if that meant powering them down (sometimes) or powering them up (more often than you'd think—see the *holy avenger* and the entire magic staff category, for examples). If you've got a favorite PC, NPC, or monster who now has an item that's "too expensive," I strongly recommend not worrying about it. The guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* that show how much money and resources characters should have at a particular level are just that—guidelines. If you found an item that's worth more than you thought, you've lucked out. The DM, of course, has the last say in this, but it shouldn't be a balance issue as long as you're using the revised game rules. The "error" should correct itself quickly.

On the other hand, if you paid good gold pieces for an item that just got devalued . . . well, buyer beware. Depending on when it happened (say, the last game session), the DM might want to let you rethink your purchase. Some DMs might want you to go revalue all of your equipment and let you purchase items until the balance comes out about equal. I don't recommend this, mainly because I think the situation will correct itself quickly, but depending on how closely you or your DM follow the guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* on magic item allocation and pricing, you might want to consider it. Do whatever makes the game the most fun.

tion mentioned above, you'll want to read through your class (or classes, for multiclass characters) to find out what changed. The general level of changes for each of the classes was covered in last month's "Revision Update," but here are some things to watch out for:

Class-Exclusive Abilities: Instead of having class-exclusive skills, we pulled a few of these mechanics into the classes themselves. Rangers and druids, for example, now are the sole practitioners of what used to be the Animal Empathy skill (now a class ability called Wild Empathy), but they need ranks in Diplomacy to make it work effectively. You should adjust your character accordingly.

Progressive Abilities: Many classes already had abilities that got better over time. The rogue's sneak attack, the monk's ascending unarmed damage, and the druid's wild shape are the most popular examples. Many of these abilities got a little more powerful or at least more organized. The uncanny dodge ability, for example, underwent some reorganization and improvement when we realized that the ability to dodge traps became less effective fairly quickly once you stopped encountering arrow traps and started running into magical glyphs. The barbarian's damage reduction was like this, too—it just started too low and didn't get better fast enough.

Better High-Level Abilities: With all the things that different D&D characters can accomplish, it was surprising to some that we got a significant amount of feedback that said that after a certain point, it wasn't fun to advance as a particular character anymore. Monks were given as a good example of a class that got more interesting at higher levels. We used the monk and a few others as models, and now more of the special-ability focused classes (like the barbarian, rogue, and paladin) gain better "capstone" abilities. If you multiclassed out of one of these classes because things got boring, maybe your DM will let you rethink your choice. Of course, since the class you multiclassed into probably got more interesting, too, you should be just fine.

10. Spells

In every edition of the D&D game, spells and magic have been one of the hardest things to balance against the other game elements. If you think of each individual spell in the D&D game as a separate rules subsystem, you see the trouble you can get into with a magic system as complex as D&D.

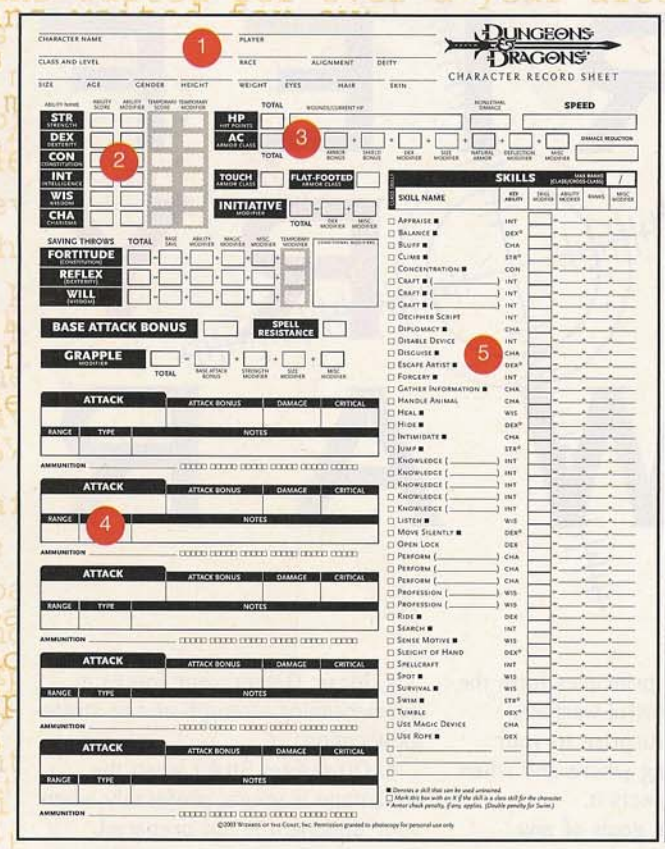
Still, that's why we received so much feedback on spells and magic, and it's why the revision team addressed each spell separately and the entire system holistically. Some things we tried to address:

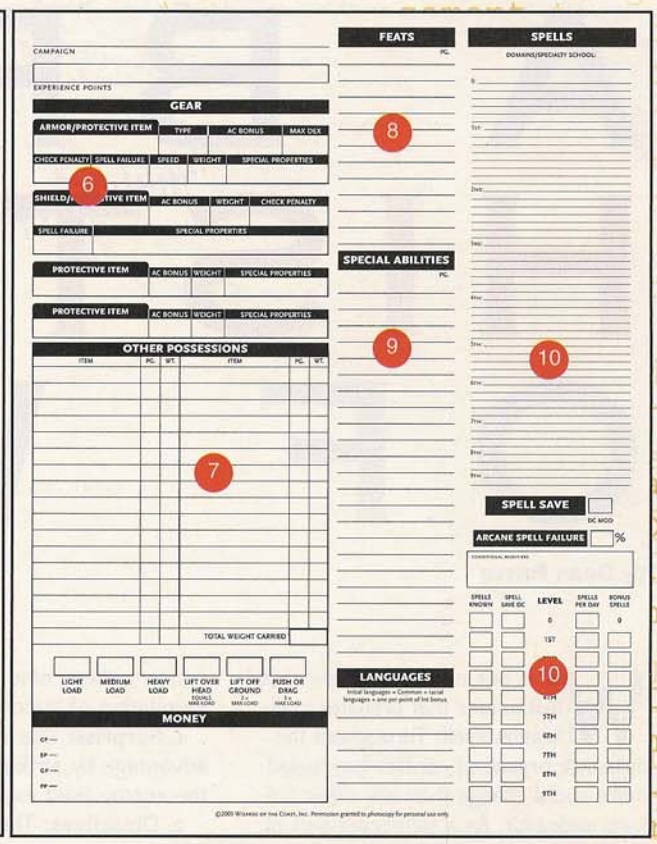
Power Level: If players of spellcasters always pick a particular spell, or never pick a particular spell, it ceases to become a viable choice. Some spells had to be revised based on this criteria, and some whole schools of magic needed rethinking. Necromancy and Divination, for example, got new spells and new rules to make them more interesting (although not necessarily better) choices, while spells like *haste* and *polymorph other* had to either get revised, split into multiple spells, or changed in level. We tried to do the first two more often than the last, but all three options occurred. Check your spell lists and compare.

Clarification: All the subsystems have to work together, so they have to be explained better. The revision team worked hard to clarify spells and often came up with new ideas to support what everyone thought a spell should do even if it didn't really do that. We also worked to standardize language and, where possible, effect. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* now contains a set of diagrams that show areas of effect, which handle nearly all the possible areas in the spell section. I strongly suggest that if you're using a spell from a product that doesn't use these area effects, you consider adopting them. This isn't so much a balance issue as just an ease-of-play issue. It's more fun to play the game when everyone understands the rules.

More Options, Better Archetypes: We included more spells and rearranged spell choices and archetypes where we could. Some spellcasters lost spells because they didn't fit the archetype (bards casting *magic missile* just seemed strange to a lot of people), but when that happened we made sure they received something in return (the bard now has the inside track on many Enchantment and information gathering spells).

Better Organization and Combination: If you look up a spell like *cat's grace* or *cure light wounds* under "c," you'll find them there, but you'll also find a description for *cat's grace, mass* and *cure light wounds, mass.* Under *"mass cure light wounds,"* you'll find a pointer back to "c." We tried to make it easy





for you to find the spell you're looking for, and to find spells you might not have known existed. Sometimes things got a little difficult. If, for example, you're looking for the old *negative energy protection* spell, you won't find it. That was a very specific spell, and we didn't think it warranted its own description . . . but it fits nicely under the effect of *death ward,* another very specific spell. Now combined, these spells serve a stronger purpose. You might have to do a little looking here, but we'll put out a name conversion guide online at **www.wizards.com** that you can use as a quick reference.

CONCLUSION

Well, that's it. It's a summary of changes based on the organization of your character sheet, and I honestly hope it helps you upgrade your characters quickly. Unfortunately, I can't go over every change to every element of the game here, but I have two important final bits of advice that will make our change to D&D 3.5 go more smoothly:

First, if you're a DM, don't agonize over fixing every one of your NPCs. The game worked fine before the revision; your players don't get to check your NPCs' statistics or abilities, so if things aren't exact, don't sweat it. Run them in 3.0 and upgrade as you become more familiar with the new version. I suggest upgrading one important NPC or monster a game session and leaving the "small fry" alone.

Second, if you're a player or a DM, try not to react too fast to any particular revision element. Remember, this wasn't done in a vacuum. Change A might have been forced by Revision B, which was important because of Addition C. The revisions were done to support D&D archetypes and the way people said they wanted to play. If your concept completely relies on a rule you know is broken or at least bent, you might have to rethink a few things. If it was just an interesting idea, it probably still works and you should look around to find the rules that support it. They're almost certainly there.

That's what the rules are for, right? D

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF WAR

by Dean Poisso

War is one of the very few social institutions that predates civilization itself. Throughout the millennia, organized conflict has fueled more social change than any other cultural endeavor. As a significant part of every culture's social fabric, it has always played a key role in shaping economics, politics, social life, philosophy, and the arts. It has made heroes and villains out of ordinary people, brought low the mighty, and elevated the humble to high pinnacles of power.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF WARFARE

Although countless lives have been lost learning the lessons of warfare, mankind has proven an able student. Through the ages, a few basic concepts have been distilled from the plethora of methods that humans have used to annihilate one another. Used in concert, these nine principles form the foundation of successful warfare.

1. **Surprise:** Use surprise to your advantage by striking where and when the enemy least expects it.

2. **Objectives:** The goals of any offensive must be clearly defined and attainable.

3. **Chain of Command:** Maintain unity of effort through unity of command structure.

4. **Mobility:** Remain flexible and, whenever possible, engage the enemy on the terrain that is most advantageous for your troops.

5. **Economy of Force:** Use maximum force in the most effective way possible to achieve the primary goal. Give secondary objectives only minimal military focus.

6. **Security:** The enemy must never know what you're planning or what your forces are doing.

7. **Mass:** Gather your forces in overwhelming strength at one strategic location.

8. **Offensive:** Strike when the advantage is yours, preferably when your opponent is not prepared. Control and retain what you have gained. Seize the initiative. Seek out the weaknesses of your enemy and capitalize on them through either guile or firepower.

9. **Simplicity:** Prepare clear, uncomplicated plans and communicate them via concise orders to ensure complete understanding by all commanders.

Although cultures and societies have changed greatly since the advent of warfare, the basic strategies employed for it have not. The hard-learned lessons enumerated above have been taught time and again, paid for with the blood of countless soldiers.

WARFARE THROUGH THE AGES

The reasons for waging war and the tools for doing so have evolved alongside humanity itself. War has often been the driving force behind new developments in science, the arts, philosophy, and religion, and these advances have in turn spurred the development of still more efficient ways to wage war. Thus has the cycle continued throughout mankind's existence.

In each era of human history, war has had different characteristics. New weapons, defenses, strategies, and tactics have appeared, flourished, and declined as they were replaced by more effective versions.

This timeline traces the development of warfare throughout the ages. It continues on page 26 and throughout the issue, ending on page 68. You can read it all at once or progress through the history of war as you progress through the articles in this issue.

THE STONE AGE

In this period, humans are focused primarily on survival. Nomadic tribes must constantly hunt and gather food and seek shelter from their harsh environment.

100,000 Years Ago: Club and Spear

The club is the first weapon in common use among early humans, although spears quickly become the weapons of choice for hunters. The first clubs are thick branches or large bones; the first spears are branches with sharpened points. Both weapons prove useful for hunting—a hunter can bring down prey with a spear from a distance and finish off the wounded animal with a club if need be. The two weapons are useful in ambush situations for much the same reasons.

100,000 Years Ago: Stone Age Conflict

Conflict occurs primarily when starvation or attrition forces one tribe to raid another for food or mates. The tactic of choice for this period is

THE GREEK PHALANX

The Spartans developed the Greek phalanx formation and used it exclusively. The formation consisted of eight to ten rows of soldiers with up to ten men each. Each soldier in the formation wore a bronze breastplate, greaves, and helm, wielded a 10-foot pike and a bronze short sword, and carried a large, round shield.

Early forms of the Greek phalanx were quite ponderous. The soldiers were packed in tightly, and combat consisted of one phalanx slamming head-on into another. Soldiers within a phalanx tended to guard their right sides, since they lacked the protection of shields on that side. When two phalanxes clashed, the soldiers would rotate counterclockwise until one phalanx eventually collapsed. This predictable result led to the strategy of putting the best soldiers on the right side of the phalanx. The ultimate goal became to see which phalanx could destroy its enemy's flank first, as they rotated around.

The phalanx was designed for pure shock value. Its troops slammed headlong into the enemy, using spears to soften up their targets before closing in with short swords and shields. Soldiers in the back rows would help to protect the front line by stabbing over the heads of those in front of them with their spears.

The success of the phalanx was unquestionable during the period when it saw the heaviest use. Its weaknesses, however, were twofold. Soldiers in a phalanx were not mobile enough to ward off fast-moving units capable of flanking them—a fact that could leave both flanks as well as the rear of the phalanx formation particularly vulnerable. The phalanx was also quite slow, and therefore vulnerable to ranged attacks.

These two flaws would prove debilitating to the Greek armies, and the phalanx was eventually abandoned in favor of more sophisticated formations and tactics.

THE CLASSIC ROMAN LEGION

The Roman legion consists of three lines of maniples arranged in checkerboard fashion. The first lines, called hastati, were composed of younger spearmen wielding the pilum—a javelin designed to pierce shields and render them useless from the added weight of the impaled missile. The hastati wore breastplates and greaves and carried the large, rectangular shield called the scutum and the infamous Roman short sword known as the gladius. Mixed in among them were the velites, skirmishers who wielded javelins and spears. The velites' task was to launch volleys of javelins from in front of the hastati, then retreat through holes in the front line.

Filling the second line to a point several yards back were the principes. These experienced soldiers were heavy infantry equipped with the best armor and weaponry. Their job was to replace the hastati should the latter be forced to fall back. With the principes at the front, the hastati could reform and attack through gaps in the line.

The last line of the legion was filled with the triaari, the oldest and most experienced soldiers. This heavy infantry group served as the last line of defense. If the principes were forced back, the triaari mounted an assault through the line. This effect proves devastating to tired enemy troops because the triaari were still fresh for battle. Once the triaari went in, the principes regrouped and rejoined them, filling any gaps in the line.

Flanking both the infantry and the skirmishers were the turmae, or cavalry. Although they were elite warriors, the Romans used them as nothing more than flanking guards. This lack of foresight cost them several major battles.

The versatility of the legion's formation meant that enemies had to constantly face fresh troops throughout conflict.

PARTHIAN HARASSING TACTICS

The emphasis on infantry as the primary basis of a military force began to decline during the Roman Empire. There is no better example of the reason for this tendency than the harassing tactics of the Parthians.

The Parthian forces were composed almost entirely of cavalry. The soldiers wore long coats of chainmail and wielded rare, iron-tipped lances. Their weapon of choice, however, was the composite bow. With the penetrating power supplied by such a weapon, an iron-tipped arrow could nail a shield to an armored Roman soldier's chest. Coupled with a tactic that later became known as the Parthian Shot, this weapon was incredibly lethal.

The Parthian Shot was launched from a cadre of several horsemen formed in loose order. Each began with a nocked arrow and four arrows in hand. Cantering toward their enemy in a wedge, they would burst into a full gallop at a distance of 100 yards and begin firing. At 50 yards, they banked right, riding across the face of the enemy line, firing arrows as they went, then finally pulling back. Multiple groups of these soldiers bewildered opponents with their rapid movements—one group bursting out of the dust cloud just as another retreated. Unable to engage such mobile foes, infantry-based forces were shot down before they could even lift their weapons.

The lethal effects of this tactic severely demoralized the Romans, who had never encountered warfare like this before. The heavy use of infantry fell into decline as cavalry became ever more versatile and deadly on the battlefield.

ambush with ranged weapons. In such a skirmish, attacks continue until one tribe or the other flees the scene. Since any significant loss of hunters on either side could be devastating to the survivability of a whole tribe, resolution usually comes quickly, keeping the lethality of such encounters low.

50,000 Years Ago: Stone Weaponry

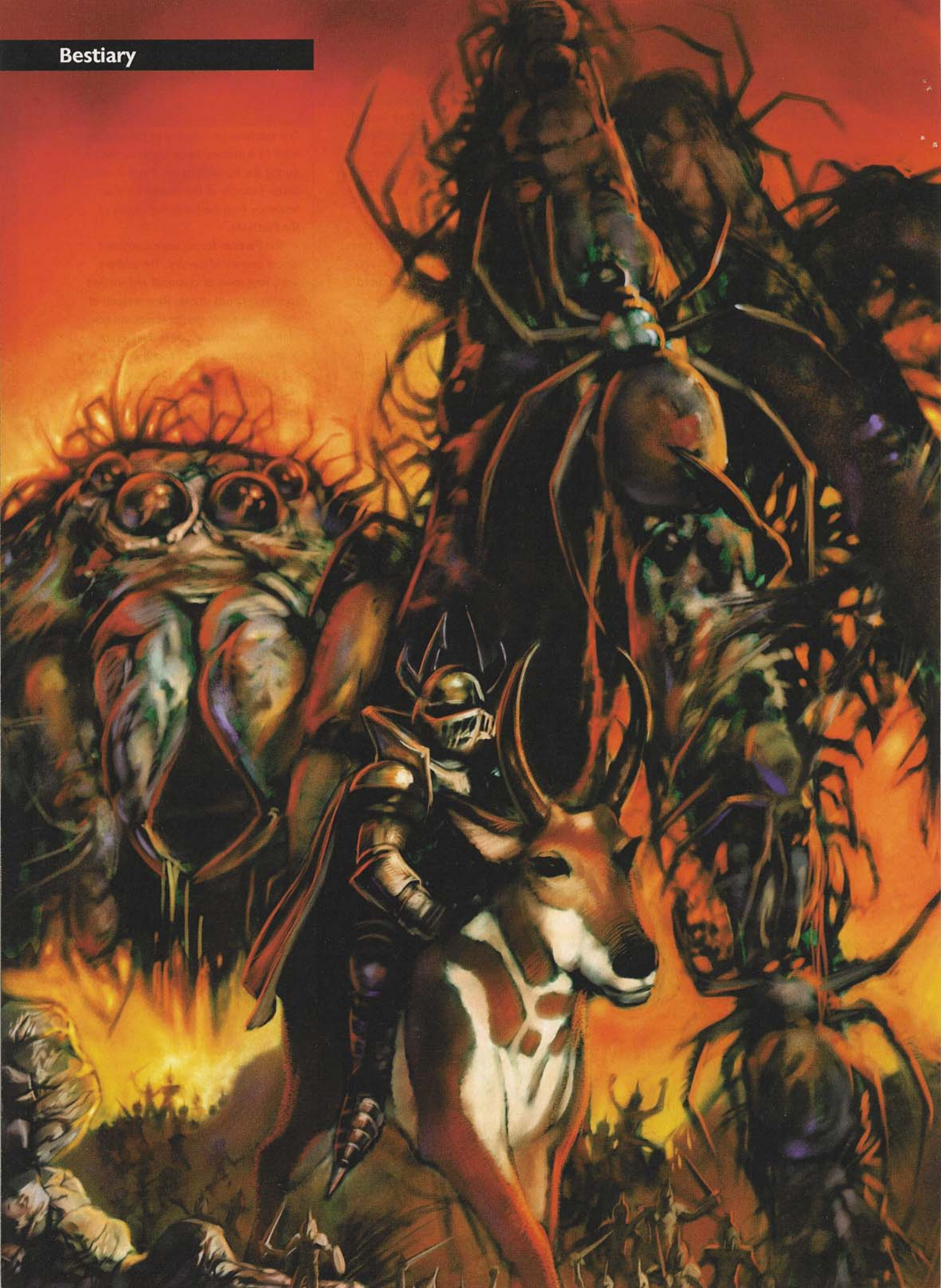
The development of the ability to craft blades from flint nodules is an enormous step toward the production of efficient tools and weaponry. Not long afterward, the first handaxes appear, although they are little more than fist-sized pieces of flint with chipped-off, razor-sharp edges. As much tools as weapons, these early handaxes are nevertheless the prototypes for all handheld weapons to come.

The skills and techniques for making flint weaponry continue to evolve over some 40,000 years through numerous small but significant advancements. Eventually, the handaxe and club are merged to create the first stone axe. In the hands of a capable hunter, such an axe can deliver swift killing blows in close-quarters fighting. Like its handheld predecessors, a stone axe is not only a weapon but also a useful tool.

25,000–23,000 Years Ago: The Bow

Among the most significant inventions of the Stone Age is the bow, which greatly amplifies the lethality of the human arsenal. The bow is the first weapon that involves mechanics more complex than a simple lever.

The first bows are made of thin, flexible wood; the first arrows are sharpened reeds with fire-hardened tips. The effective range of such a simple bow is little more than 50 yards. As limited as they are, however, these weapons represent an enormous advance in mankind's ability to bring down large game—and to kill enemies.



BEASTS OF THE BATTLEFIELD

War Constructs and Creatures

By Andy Collins and Matthew Sernett · illustrated by Mike May

If necessity is the mother of invention, then war is one of necessity's parents. For thousands of years, warfare has driven scientific, political, and social innovations beyond counting. In a world where monsters are a part of life rather than just fodder for fantasy stories, it stands to reason that war would also lead to new creatures bred or built expressly for the battlefield.

This article presents five such creatures. The crawling slaughter, death hurler, and golem swarm embody three different techniques for invoking destruction on a large scale. Each one is the result of physical creation, whether from scratch or from the remains of other creatures.

The guardian steed and wardrake serve more as battlefield allies than as pure agents of destruction, although the wardrake is certainly capable of assuming the latter role as well. Although originally derived from other creatures, these two monsters are now particularly well suited for their roles in battle.

CRAWLING SLAUGHTER

Gargantuan Undead
Hit Dice: 24d12 (156 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 30 ft., climb 20 ft.
Armor Class: 24 (-4 size, +2 Dex, +16 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 22
Base Attack/Grapple: +12/+31
Attack: Bite +15 melee (3d6+10)
Full Attack: Bite +15 melee (3d6+10) or web +9 ranged touch (special)
Space/Reach: 20 ft./15 ft.
Special Attacks: Stench, web
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., single actions only, undead traits
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +14
Abilities: Str 25, Dex 15, Con–, Int–, Wis 10, Cha 1
Skills: Climb +15
Feats: –

Environment: Any land or underground
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 8
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 25-48 HD (Gargantuan); 49-64 HD (Colossal)

The crawling slaughter is an enormous undead creature created from the remains of a monstrous spider. Although not venomous, the crawling slaughter drips fetid goo from its orifices as it lumbers across the landscape. The creature's horrific stench foretells its approach for hundreds of yards, and it leaves a trail of slime and rotting lumps of flesh behind it.

The crawling slaughter is often found in the company of drow, serving either as the centerpiece of a warband or occasionally as a mount for a powerful drow cleric. In the latter case, the drow commands the creature with a large spiked ankus. A crawling slaughter feels no fear, no joy, no want, and very little pain—it exists only to destroy the enemies of its master.

Combat

The crawling slaughter follows whatever simple instructions it receives from its creator or controller. It is capable of following directions such as, "March forward and destroy all dwarves you encounter."

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding a crawling slaughter is overwhelming. Living creatures within 30 feet must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same crawling slaughter's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Web (Ex): A crawling slaughter can create a web three times per day. This ability is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet and a range increment of 10 feet. A web attack is effective against targets

THE CREATURE'S HORRIFIC STENCH FO
YARDS, AND IT LEAVES A TRAIL OF SLIM

REVISION ALERT: SPACE

Creatures in D&D 3.5 no longer have the complicated Face/Reach entry. Instead of a creature's "face" being represented as "10 ft. by 40 ft." and other similar unwieldy shapes that made movement on diagonals and flanking difficult to determine, all creatures have a Space/Reach entry. The "space" part of the entry describes what size square a creature occupies. All creatures occupy one of several standard square sizes based on the individual creature's size. Thus a creature with a Space/Reach entry of "10 ft./5 ft." occupies a 10-foot-by-10-foot square and has a reach of 5 feet.

REVISION ALERT: THE SICKENED CONDITION

"Sickened" is a condition new to the revised D&D game. Identical to the description of the effect of a ghast's stench, the new official condition has the following effects: The character takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks.

15,000 B.C.E.: The Atlatl and Flint Blades
The invention of the atlatl increases the lethality and range of the era's heaviest ranged weapon—the spear. Resembling a baton with a notch in which the butt of a spear can rest, the atlatl effectively extends the length of the user's arm, improving the effectiveness of spear throwing.

Although somewhat awkward to use, the atlatl provides devastating accuracy. A spear thrown overhand with an atlatl has significantly greater velocity and penetrating power than a hand-thrown spear does. A single atlatl-launched spear can bring down a mammoth or kill a human.

By this period, the handheld flint axes of old have generally given way to smaller and more compact flint daggers. Tying one of these stone knives to the end of a spear produces the first real bladed ranged weapon. Arrows follow suit, acquiring sharpened flint tips, and their manufacture becomes a highly developed skill.

10,000 B.C.E.: The Neolithic Revolution
The gradual shift from hunter-gatherer tribes to agrarian settlements is known as the Neolithic Revolution. This shift of focus provides the foundation for the development of both civilization and organized conflict. After thousands of years of living on the verge of starvation as nomadic hunter-gatherers, the tribes that adopt agricultural lifestyles now have a constant supply of food, which allows for consistent tribal growth.

For the first time, these now-immobile tribes have something besides themselves to protect—their precious food sources. Organization becomes necessary for continued survival and creates the need for unique roles within the tribe. Tribal leadership develops, establishing the roots of the class-based societies to come. Other key roles that appear as populations grow include specialized protectors of the tribe and its food sources.

As intertribal conflicts begin to involve larger and larger numbers of people, the lethality of combat rises. A dedicated group of successful fighters becomes vital for the continued growth and sustainability of the community.

TELLS ITS APPROACH FOR HUNDREDS OF
AND ROTTING LUMPS OF FLESH BEHIND IT.

of up to one size category greater than the crawling slaughter. (See Chapter 7: Equipment in the *Player's Handbook* for details on net attacks.) Upon a successful hit, the web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. The crawling slaughter cannot create a sheet of web like a normal monstrous spider can.

A creature entangled in a crawling slaughter's web can burst it with a successful Strength check (DC 32) or escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 32). Both are standard actions. The DCs are Constitution-based (+0 due to a lack of Constitution) and include a +10 racial bonus.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Much like a zombie, a crawling slaughter has poor reflexes and can perform only a single action in a round. Thus, it can either move or attack, but it can do both only if it charges.

Undead Type (Ex): A crawling slaughter is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. It is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage to its physical ability scores, ability drain, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or death from massive damage. It cannot be *raised*, and *resurrection* works only if it is willing. It has darkvision 60 feet.

DEATH HURLER

Huge Construct (Extraplanar)
Hit Dice: 14d10+40 (117 hp)
Initiative: +4
Speed: 60 ft.
Armor Class: 27 (-2 size, +4 Dex, +15 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 23
Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+26
Attack: Bolt +14 ranged (1d10+8)
Full Attack: 6 bolts +14 ranged (1d10+8)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./–
Special Attacks: Bolts, frightful presence, ram 2d8+8, trample 2d8+12
Special Qualities: Construct traits, combat shot, cover, damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, spell resistance 14
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +5
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 18, Con–, Int–, Wis 12, Cha 1
Skills: –
Feats: Precise Shot[B], Shot on the Run[B]

Environment: Any land or underground (Nine Hells)
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 11
Treasure: Remaining magic and normal crossbow bolts
Alignment: Always lawful evil
Advancement: 15-28 HD (Huge); 29-42 HD (Gargantuan)

Death hurlers are deadly engines of horror and doom created in Baator as weapons of war. Although they are usually reserved for the conflicts between the heavens and hells, devil nobles occasionally lend these fearsome constructs to mortal generals who are foolish enough to strike bargains with baatezu.

A death hurler follows the commands of its creator, an individual indicated by its creator, or anyone carrying a specific item designated by its creator. The death hurler follows the instructions of its creator in preference to all others. Anyone empowered to command the death hurler can do so if she is within 60 feet of the construct and both visible and audible to it. If uncommanded, a death hurler follows the last commands of its creator to the best of its ability. It feels no such compunction to follow the last commands of any other individual empowered to instruct it, however. Since it is inherently a creature of evil, an uncommanded death hurler goes berserk if its creator's last commands do not cover its current situation, attacking every creature it can find until destroyed or commanded again by its creator.

A death hurler looks like a siege tower constructed from the torn and broken bodies of the damned. Great iron spikes and blades protrude from its fleshy walls, piercing the tortured dead that adorn its armored exterior. Tucked between and pushed through

REVISION ALERT: CONSTRUCT BONUS HIT POINTS

Because its body is a mass of unliving matter, a construct is hard to destroy. It gains bonus hit points based on size, as shown on the following table.

Construct Size	Bonus Hit Points
Fine	–
Diminutive	–
Tiny	–
Small	10
Medium	20
Large	30
Huge	40
Gargantuan	60
Colossal	80

REVISION ALERT: BONUS FEATS[B]

Like in 3rd edition D&D, creatures in D&D 3.5 can have bonus feats for which they do not meet the prerequisites. These feats are now denoted in a monster description with a superscript letter "b" ([B]).

8,000 B.C.E.: Cities and Strongholds
By 8,000 B.C.E., small cities with thousands of inhabitants are beginning to appear, as evidenced by the Neolithic city known as Catal Huyuk, in what is now Turkey. This community in particular represents a significant milestone in the development of organized conflict.

Remarkably sophisticated for its time, Catal Huyuk can support up to 6,000 people and maintains a fighting force that probably numbers well into the hundreds. The city's structure is designed for maximum defensibility, with its living spaces situated inside wide, hollow walls. The center of each living area has a hole in the roof that allows the occupants to exit via a ladder, which they then pull up behind them. Invaders who manage to break through the outside wall end up in an empty room with nowhere to go.

Flint weaponry has evolved as well. Each flint spearhead or arrowhead now features a small tang, which is inserted into the shaft of the weapon. This advancement greatly increases the durability of flint weaponry, which previously had a tendency to shatter under heavy use.

6,000 B.C.E.: The Proliferation of Bows
The use of bows and arrows begins to spread throughout Europe, particularly the northern section. Although they are still quite simple in construction, bows become mankind's primary hunting weapon.

4,000 B.C.E.: The Invention of the Wheel
The wheel is invented in Mesopotamia. It quickly finds use in all areas of human endeavor.

Meanwhile, in Mesopotamia and Egypt, stone weaponry reaches its peak. Flintnapping is still a painstaking, laborious process, but flint daggers, maces, and spear blades are ubiquitous. The flint arrowheads of this period have better penetration ability than their iron counterparts thousands of years later will.

3,800 B.C.E.: Copper Weapons
While heating and cooling copper for use in household goods, metalsmiths and jewelers discover the process of annealing, which makes a metal significantly stronger. Annealed copper is

A SWARM OF THESE CONSTRUCTS (WH
GOLEMS) CAN DISMANTLE AN EN

the decaying corpses are the barrels and guide troughs of crossbowlike devices hidden within the body of the construct. A death hurler thunders into battle on great spiked rollers at the behest of evil warlords, crushing all within its path.

Combat

In combat, death hurlers follow the commands of the generals to whom they are assigned. In great battles, they are often placed where they can fire on important enemy positions. When the enemy sallies out to attack the troublesome construct, it rolls over them on its way to a more advantageous position. When confronted with melee targets it cannot trample, the death hurler either rams them or shoots them down.

Bolts (Ex): A compartment within the death hurler, accessible via a hatch that it controls, can hold up to five hundred crossbow bolts at once. Through a series of complicated mechanisms, the death hurler throws these bolts at designated targets. A bolt attack has a range increment of 120 feet.

Frightful Presence (Ex): 30-foot radius, HD 13 or fewer, Will DC 12 negates.

Ram (Ex): When performing the bull rush action, the death hurler rams and impales the target on its spikes. This attack automatically deals 2d8+8 points of piercing damage, regardless of the result of the bull rush. A target of the death hurler's ram attack takes half damage with a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 25). The save DC is Strength-based.

Trample (Ex): As a standard action during its turn each round, a death hurler can run over opponents at least one size category smaller than itself. This attack deals 2d8+12 points of bludgeoning damage. A trampled opponent can attempt either an attack of opportunity at a -4 penalty or a Reflex save (DC 25) for half damage. The save DC is Strength-based.

Combat Shot (Ex): A death hurler making a bolt attack does not provoke an attack of opportunity from melee opponents, and it can make bolt attacks even when grappled.

Cover (Ex): At the top of a death hurler is a 10-foot-by-10-foot space in which creatures can stand. The death hurler can be commanded to allow specific individuals to climb its sides and stand on its walled top. Each individual permitted to do so can attempt the necessary Climb checks (DC 15) to reach the top, which is 20 feet from the ground. Those who climb it successfully can then stand in that area. The 3-foot-high "walls" of the tower's top grant cover to Medium or smaller creatures behind them. Attacks that target such protected creatures and miss have a chance of hitting the death hurler, as described under the rules for cover in the *Player's Handbook*.

Any creature that does not have permission to climb on or stand in the death hurler can do so anyway by succeeding at an opposed grapple check (grapple bonus +26). Success means the creature can climb or stand normally for 1 round; failure indicates that the death hurler has thrown off the creature, which takes falling damage as appropriate. A death hurler cannot shoot bolts at creatures on its platform, nor can it ram them.

Should grapple checks fail to dislodge offending creatures, a death hurler can roll over as a full-round action, traveling 60 feet as it does so. Such a rollover is treated as a trample attack against any creature that is not on the death hurler but is in the path of its roll. Any creature on the platform or climbing on the death hurler's sides, or grappling the death hurler takes 2d8+12 points of damage (Reflex DC 25 half). The save DC is Strength-based. Any creature that fails its Reflex save is thrown off the death hurler at the midpoint of its 60-foot move. A death hurler cannot roll over if a creature of a size category equal to or greater than its own grapples it.

GOLEM SWARM

Tiny Construct (Swarm)
Hit Dice: 12d10 (66 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 20 ft. (can't run)
Armor Class: 15 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple: +9/–
Attack: Swarm (4d6)
Full Attack: Swarm (4d6)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./–
Special Attacks: Dismantle, distraction
Special Qualities: Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 5/adamantine, half damage from slashing and piercing, low-light vision, magic immunity, swarm traits
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +4
Abilities: Str 5, Dex 14, Con –, Int –, Wis 11, Cha 1
Skills: –
Feats: –

Environment: Any land
Organization: Solitary, pair, troop (3-4 swarms), or horde (11-20 swarms)
Challenge Rating: 9
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: None

A golem swarm is a tireless, remorseless army of figurines carved from

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used to fashion arrowheads, small daggers, and spear tips. These copper weapons are not only much easier to produce than their flint counterparts, but they also hold their edges better and resist breakage. For the first time, serviceable blades larger than daggers can be created. The advent of copper weaponry gives rise to the first arms race.

3,200 B.C.E.: The First Soldiers

Mesopotamia, rich in commerce and constantly growing in population, has become a thriving civilization. In its highly organized city-states, huge civil projects are carried out under the watchful eyes of the first Sumerian kings and the leaders of religious sects. Conflict between these city-states is common, largely because of the unsteady alliances that keep the ambitions of their respective kings in balance.

A new social class arises within this quarrelsome setting: the warrior caste. These first soldiers have only one job—to facilitate combat whenever necessary. Their relative organization and strength is debatable, but they are well armed. A typical soldier might carry a copper axe with a head weighing up to 6 pounds, a mace, a spear, a bow, or a combination thereof.

The art of coppersmithing reaches its apex throughout Mesopotamia and spreads to the Mediterranean region, Asia, Egypt, and eastern Europe. Flint weaponry is still common but definitely in decline.

3,100 B.C.E.: The First Army

Menes I unites the lands along the Nile through force in 3,100 B.C.E., creating the first Egyptian Empire and launching the age of the pharaohs. The empire gives rise to an extremely advanced culture in which writing, record-keeping, and religious bureaucracies flourish.

Regional rulers are responsible for raising and maintaining provincial armies to defend their districts. To ensure an adequate supply of soldiers, one out of every hundred citizens is conscripted into military service. Although copper weaponry is available, the Egyptians still utilize flint weapons almost exclusively, so provincial conscripts are equipped with stone maces, simple bows, and flint daggers.

REVISION ALERT: THE SWARM SUBTYPE

The swarm subtype is an innovative concept introduced in the *Fiend Folio*. This idea was adapted and placed in the 3.5 *Monster Manual*. The text for the new swarm subtype is too lengthy to reproduce here, but users of the *Fiend Folio* should note that there are a few revisions to the type.

stone. Individually, each member of the golem swarm appears to be nothing more than a 6-inch-tall stone statuette of a warrior that moves jerkily, with a clumsy gait. When viewed from a distance, the swarm looks like an undulating gray mass

A swarm of these constructs (which numbers about one hundred fifty golems) can dismantle an entire town in a matter of hours. Peasants might fear locusts, but even small cities fear golem swarms.

A golem swarm cannot speak or make any vocal noise.

Combat

A golem swarm follows the orders of its creator. Although each statuette is relatively weak, the jabs and slices of the entire swarm can deal serious damage. In order to attack, a single swarm must move into its opponents' space, which provokes an attack of opportunity. The swarm can occupy the same space as a creature of any size, since it crawls all over its opponents, although it remains a Large creature with a 10-foot face. Swarms never make attacks of opportunity, but they can provoke them.

Unlike any other creature with a 10-foot face, a swarm is completely shapeable. It can occupy any four contiguous squares and ignores the penalties for squeezing into a space smaller than its own.

Dismantle (Ex): On its turn, the swarm attempts to dismantle all objects within its area, such as wagons, furniture, or houses. It automatically dismantles all mundane objects in the area in 1 round, but a particularly intricate object, such as a trap or clockwork device, requires 2d4 rounds. The swarm can't dismantle magic items.

If one or more creatures occupy the golem swarm's space, it instead attempts to remove an object from each creature's possession. On the golem swarm's turn each round, roll 1d8 for each target and consult the table below to see which object it attempts to remove, rerolling if that target does not have the indicated object. To resist, the creature must make a successful Reflex save (DC 16). Failure means the item has been removed from the target creature's possession and is lying on the ground. The save DC is Constitution-based.

ROLL	ITEM
1	Weapon in hand
2	Shield
3	Armor or robe
4	Hat or helm
5	Cloak
6	Ring, amulet, or other jewelry
7	Belt
8	Bracers or gloves

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature vulnerable to the golem swarm's damage that begins its turn with a golem swarm in its square is nauseated for 1 round; a Fortitude save (DC 16) negates the effect. Even with a successful save, spellcasting or concentrating on spells within the area of a golem swarm requires a Concentration check (DC 20 + spell level). Using a skill requiring patience and concentration requires a Concentration check (DC 20). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Construct Traits: A golem swarm has immunity to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. The creature is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. It cannot heal damage but can be repaired. A golem swarm has darkvision 60 feet and low-light vision.

Magic Immunity (Ex): A golem swarm is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, just as if the caster had failed to overcome spell resistance, except as follows: A *transmute rock to mud* spell deals 5d6 points of damage to the swarm, with no saving throw. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the structure of any golem within the swarm, but it makes the swarm vulnerable to non-adamantine weapons for the following round.

Swarm Traits (Ex): A golem swarm has no clear front or back and no discernable anatomy, so it is not subject to critical hits or flanking. It is immune to all weapon damage.

Reducing a golem swarm to 0 hit points or fewer causes it to break up, although damage taken until that point does not degrade its ability to attack or resist attack. A golem swarm is never staggered or reduced to a dying state by damage. Also, it cannot be tripped,

THE BRONZE AGE

The Bronze Age begins when a region develops the skill and knowledge to craft bronze tools.

Significantly sturdier than their copper counterparts, bronze weapons vastly alter the application of military might throughout the world. The use of bronze for armor also serves to escalate the weapons race.

At first glance, the Bronze Age appears to consist of long periods of peace interspersed with isolated periods of widespread warfare. In truth, the use of force as a means to an end proliferates throughout Bronze Age cultures, resulting in nearly nonstop conflict. It is during this period that the concept of warfare as a state-sponsored endeavor is born.

3,000 B.C.E.: The Discovery of Bronze

In Mesopotamia, it is discovered that adding a tiny amount of tin to molten copper produces a metal that is far more durable than copper alone. The advent of this new material, known as bronze, changes the face of warfare in the region as its advantages for weapon use become obvious. Bronze weaponry quickly proliferates throughout Sumeria, and the constant conflict between the Sumerian city-states rises to new and bloodier levels. Professional soldiers become commonplace.

The first examples of armor appear in the form of leather helmets augmented by small bronze plates, complemented by leather cloaks with bronze rings sewn into the fabric. The combination proves to be a strong defense against the mace, almost driving it from use.

The chariot makes its first appearance as a simple battlefield conveyance. This rickety contraption with two axles and four wheels resembles an oxcart, but it quickly gains popularity as a mobile war platform. Capable of carrying a driver, an archer, and a shield-bearer into battle, the chariot represents the first major addition to organized conflict beyond the infantry.

In the early Bronze Age, Sumeria produces numerous innovations and tactics that will continue to be staples of warfare for ages to come. At no other point in ancient history is the drive for martial supremacy and military innovation found in such bloody abundance.

A GOLEM SWARM IS IMUNE TO ANY S
EFFECT THAT TARGETS A SPECIFIC NU

grappled, or bull rushed, and it cannot grapple another.

A golem swarm is immune to any spell or effect that targets a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells such as *disintegrate*). A golem swarm takes a -10 penalty on saving throws against spells or effects that affect an area, such as many evocation spells or grenadelike weapons. If the area attack does not allow a saving throw, the golem swarm takes double damage instead. Treat the golem swarm as a Tiny creature for the purpose of wind effects.

Construction

The individual figurines that make up a golem swarm must all be chiseled from a single block of hard stone, such as granite, weighing at least 3,000 pounds. The stone must be of exceptional quality and cost at least 5,000 gp. Assembling the golems requires a successful Craft (sculpting or masonry) check (DC 19).

CL 14th; Craft Construct, *antimagic field, cat's grace, geas/quest;* Price 75,000 gp; Cost to Create: 42,500 gp + 2,800 XP.

GUARDIAN STEED

Large Magical Beast
Hit Dice: 4d10+8 (30 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 50 ft.
Armor Class: 17 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +1 deflection, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+12
Attack: Hoof +7 melee (1d6+4)
Full Attack: 2 hooves +7 melee (1d6+4) and gore +2 melee (1d4+2)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: Aura of deflection, darkvision 60 ft., evasion, low-light vision, sanctuary, scent
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +2
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 8
Skills: Listen +5, Spot +4
Feats: Endurance, Lightning Reflexes

Environment: Any land
Organization: Solitary, domesticated, or herd (6-30)
Challenge Rating: 3
Treasure: None
Alignment: Usually neutral good
Advancement: 5-8 HD (Large)

Although originally bred by elves, guardian steeds are now used as mounts by many races. Once a guardian steed accepts a rider, it remains loyal until it either dies or is released from service. It can be handled, pushed, taught, trained, or reared as an animal of Intelligence 2 (see the Handle Animal skill), but all DCs for these functions increase by 5.

A guardian steed looks like a big, powerfully muscled antelope or similar herd animal, with a golden-brown hide and black antlers that curve forward to sharp tips. Its back is broad, and its gait is unusually smooth.

In the wild, guardian steeds live in herds. The discovery of such a herd is a rare event that usually leads to the domestication of all the creatures in it (or at least the "adoption" of one or more young by the discovering party). A young guardian steed is worth 500 gp to someone capable of raising it.

A guardian steed understands a single language (typically Common or Elven) but is incapable of speech.

Combat

The guardian steed prefers to use its sanctuary ability to avoid combat. When ridden into battle, however, it defends its rider to the best of its ability.

Aura of Deflection (Su): The guardian steed has an innate aura that grants both it and its rider damage reduction 5/magic against ranged weapons, much as the *protection from arrows* spell does. This aura also grants both steed and rider a +1 deflection bonus to AC.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage (such as a *fireball*), the guardian steed instead takes no damage with a successful saving throw. Its rider, however, does not gain the benefits of evasion. This ability can be used only if the guardian steed is wearing light armor or no armor and carrying no more than a medium load.

REVISION ALERT: NEW FEAT

CRAFT CONSTRUCT [ITEM CREATION]

The creature can create golems and other magic automatons that obey its orders.

Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item.

Benefit: A creature with this feat can create any construct whose prerequisites it meets. Enchanting a construct takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its market price. To enchant a construct, a spellcaster must spend 1/25 the item's price in XP and use up raw materials costing half of this price (see the Golem, Homunculus, and Shield Guardian monster entries for details). A creature with this feat can repair constructs that have taken damage. In one day of work, the creature can repair up to 20 points of damage by expending 50 gp per point of damage repaired. A newly created construct has average hit points for its Hit Dice.

2,700 B.C.E.: The First War
Mebaragesi, the first King of the Sumerians, wages war against the Elamites, who live to the south of Sumeria in what is now northern Iran. The Sumerians are victorious. The records of this conflict are the oldest writings that describe warfare between two cultures.

By this time, the chariot has become an established instrument of war. Usually pulled by wild asses called onagers, this two-axled vehicle serves as a mobile firing platform for archers and the shield-bearers who provide them with cover. A byproduct of the chariot's development is the invention of reins to control the onagers.

During this period, the city of Urak in Mesopotamia becomes the first fully walled city. Primitive defensive battlements bedeck its wall, and a large fighting force defends it.

2,686 B.C.E.: The Egyptian Dynasties
The Old Kingdom of Egypt is established when the pharaoh's armies complete their military conquest of neighboring Nubia and Libya. The Egyptian armies utilize little in the way of real tactics, relying almost entirely on overwhelming numbers to achieve victory.

2,600 B.C.E.: The First True Armies
Bloody Sumerian conflicts lead to the development of disciplined combat tactics and the first articulated armies. Armored infantry units fight in phalanxlike formations, eight men across and six men deep, protected by shield-walls. Archers and charioteers form crucial arms to protect the ranks of infantry. Effective use of this formation requires extensive training in the use of melee weapons and maneuvers.

The first standing armies in history appear in Mesopotamia at this time. These armies range in size from five hundred to a few thousand soldiers and are stationed in various city-states year round.

2,600 B.C.E.: Sickle Sword, Socketed Axe
The Sumerians develop several important new weapons, including the sickle sword and the socketed axe. The sickle sword is a long blade

Sanctuary (Su): The guardian steed radiates an effect similar to that of the *sanctuary* spell that surrounds both it and its rider at all times. Any opponent attempting to strike or otherwise directly attack the steed or its rider, even with a targeted spell, must attempt a Will save (DC 15), as noted in the spell's description. If either the steed or its rider attacks, the *sanctuary* effect is broken, but the guardian steed can activate it again as a free action 1d4 rounds later.

Scent (Ex): Detect opponents within 30 feet. Exact location is not revealed unless within 5 feet. Track by scent.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a guardian steed is up to 200 pounds; a medium load, 201-400 pounds; a heavy load, 401-600 pounds. A guardian steed can drag 3,000 pounds.

Guardian Steeds as Cohorts or Special Mounts

A guardian steed may be selected as a cohort by a character with the Leadership feat. Treat it as a 6th-level NPC for this purpose.

A paladin of at least 7th level may select a guardian steed as her special mount. Treat the character's paladin level as 2 levels lower than it actually is for the purpose of determining the guardian steed's special mount abilities.

WARDRAKE

Huge Dragon
Hit Dice: 15d12+60 (157 hp)
Initiative: +5
Speed: 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
Armor Class: 21 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +12 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 20
Base Attack/Grapple: +15/+29
Attack: Bite +19 melee (3d6+6)
Full Attack: Bite +19 melee (3d6+6) and 2 claws +14 melee (1d8+3) and tail slap +14 melee (2d6+9)
Space/Reach: 20 ft./15 ft.
Special Attacks: Shattering roar
Special Qualities: Combat riding, darkvision 60 ft., immunities (paralysis, *sleep*), low-light vision, scent
Saves: Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +12
Abilities: Str 23, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13
Skills: Climb +18, Jump +18, Listen +12, Search +7, Spot +21, Survival +13
Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack

Environment: Any land
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 9
Treasure: None
Alignment: Usually neutral evil
Advancement: 16-30 HD (Huge); 31-45 HD (Gargantuan)

Wardrakes are powerful dragons bred for the battlefield. Whether bearing mighty warlords into combat or merely serving as airborne shock troops, these creatures inspire both awe and terror in landbound viewers.

A wardrake has a sinuous, well-muscled body and batlike wings that span a full 50 feet. Its scales usually appear dark gray, but when exposed to sunlight, they take on the look of burnished steel. The wardrake's long, flat tail and its ability to flex and contract its wings grant it considerable maneuverability in the air. Its eyes gleam yellow, and its claws and razor-sharp teeth are pure white.

A wardrake speaks Draconic and one other language taught during maturation—often Common or Infernal. Its voice is sibilant and unnerving to those unused to the company of such creatures. A young wardrake can be reared with the Handle Animal skill (DC 20 + HD), but it can't otherwise be influenced with that skill. Its breeding allows it no purpose other than battle, and it can be commanded like any other intelligent creature.

Combat

More maneuverable than most flying creatures of its size, the wardrake prefers to remain airborne during a fight. It softens up targets by using its shattering roar coupled with its Flyby Attack feat, then picks off weakened foes.

Shattering Roar (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, a wardrake can emit a hypersonic roar in a 30-foot cone. The roar deals 2d6 points of sonic damage to each creature within its area (Fortitude DC 21 half) and acts as a targeted *shatter* spell against all exposed metallic objects, such as weapons, armor, and shields. Each such object in the area must succeed at a Will save (DC 21) or suffer 2d6 points of sonic damage. Both save DCs are Constitution-based. Worn or carried objects use the carrying creature's saving throw bonus. Metallic objects within packs or otherwise protected are unaffected by the roar, as are nonmetallic objects.

Combat Riding (Ex): The wardrake is bred and trained to bear a rider onto the battlefield. Thus, it grants its rider a +4 circumstance bonus on all Ride checks.

Scent (Ex): Detect opponents within 30 feet. Exact location is not revealed unless within 5 feet. Track by scent. D

with a front-heavy, sicklelike curve that can inflict terrible slashing wounds. The socketed axe, a major innovation, makes bronze blades far sturdier and less apt to break in battle than their forebears. Thinner, curved axeblades that can penetrate armor with ease also come into common use during this time. These armor-penetrating axes retain their usefulness on the battlefield for the next 3,000 years.

2,600 B.C.E.: Military Titles
The Egyptian army develops military titles and an elaborate bureaucracy to serve its officers. The Egyptians begin paving highways to allow swifter movement of troops as well as easier, faster trade. These paved roads allow the Egyptian armies to range farther than most other military units of similar size, and this mobility provides ample protection and thus greater stability for the nation as a whole.

At the same time, Egypt's uncontested control of the region tends to stifle military innovation. Natural barriers prevent outside invasion, so there is little actual combat with better-equipped forces. Thus, despite the kingdom's enormous size and cultural advancement, its soldiers continue to use the same weapons they have used for the past thousand years: flint-bladed daggers, simple bows, and maces.

2,500 B.C.E.: The First Siege Weapons
The first siege weapons take the field as warfare among the fortified cities of Sumeria becomes increasingly frequent. Battering rams, first implemented to destroy the fortified walls and gates of large cities, become a routine component of Mesopotamian armies of significant size. The use of the battering ram spurs the development of more formidable defenses.

2,340 B.C.E.: The Sumerian Dynasty
Sargon of Akkad, regarded as history's first great military general, conquers and unites the warring states of Sumeria for the first time in four millennia. He then attacks neighboring nations, extending Sumerian dominance beyond Mesopotamia. His reign spreads Sumeria's military knowledge and skills throughout the region.

SHUT UP AND ROLL!

15 Ways To Speed Up Combat

by Carla Harker

PLAYER 1: "I cast magic missile at the orc."

PLAYER 2: "No, don't do that! The fighters will take him out easily. Use one of your darts."

PLAYER 1: "Oh, okay. I'm going to use a poison-tipped dart. Let me look up the damage this kind of poison does."

PLAYER 3: "Hey, I reloaded my crossbow at the end of my last turn."

PLAYER 4: "Yeah, and I wanted to take my 5-foot step."

DM: "So, whose turn is it anyway?"

Combat is an important part of the D&D rules, but let's face it, even the most experienced players and DMs can spend far too long resolving the actions in a round. Such delays can lead to frustrating game experiences because the characters can't achieve as much as they would if combat were resolved more efficiently.

If the above exchange sounds familiar, try some of the suggestions presented below for speeding up combat in your game. Some are for players, some are for DMs, and some are for everyone at the table.

FOR PLAYERS

Any player can use the following techniques to speed combat along. Try them and see how much more your characters can get done during a game session.

1 Know what you're going to do before it's your turn. Don't chat, nap, or stare off into space while waiting for your turn; pay attention to what others are doing. You shouldn't have to ask, "OK, who's still alive? Who's this guy? When did he run up to me?" Make use of the time between turns by analyzing the battlefield and coming up with a plan of attack. When you don't pay attention, you force everyone else to wait while you catch up.

2 Don't offer suggestions to other players unless they request advice. Encouraging suggestions from others can turn every round of combat into a committee decision. Some players like to suggest actions that might benefit their own characters more than they benefit the group. Others suggest only actions that fit in with their particular styles of play. But players should never feel pressured to play a certain way; it's the diversity of styles that adds spice to a gaming group.

When someone asks for ideas, responses should be brief, and the DM should step in if the process is taking too long or it seems that the player is being pressured to make decisions according to the standards of others.

3 Write down the descriptions of your character's skills, feats, and spells, and attach those notes to your character sheet. Ever have an exchange like the following during a game?

Player 1: "I'm going to cast veil."

DM: "What's the duration, and does it have a saving throw?"

Player 1: "Um, I don't know. Let me look it up."

Some DMs might have every detail of every spell in the game memorized, but it's unreasonable to expect that. If you attach the descriptions of your character's skills, feats, and spells to the character sheet, you won't have to make everyone wait while you page through the *Player's Handbook* in search of information about how they work. Some DMs might not want you to bring all your books to the gaming table anyway.

4 Don't communicate in-game information if your character is not in the area, is unconscious, or otherwise would not be able to speak. Suppose the paladin visits her deity's temple and therefore misses out when the rest of the party gets into a brawl at the local tavern. Since she can't provide her last potion of *cure light wounds* to the now-unconscious monk, she shouldn't be able to suggest that the fighters drag the monk to safety either. In the same vein, the monk should not ask someone to rescue her while she's unconscious.

If a particular combat is going to last for a long time, the DM might wish to waive this rule so that players who are out of the picture won't be bored. For the most part, however, if circumstances exist in the game that would prevent a real person from speaking to comrades, the same limitation applies to your PC.

5 Keep extraneous chatter with the DM to a minimum. The DM is probably your friend, and at least to some extent, a game is a social occasion, so chatting with the DM is a perfectly natural thing to do. But when one player jokes around with the DM excessively or keeps asking him questions while he's trying to run a combat, he must decide which player to ignore—the excessively demanding one or the one whose turn it is. Not only is forcing such a choice discourteous to both the DM and the other players, it gets the DM off track. He is the one person who absolutely must pay attention during each combat round, so if he gets distracted, play invariably slows down.

If your PC spent as much time deciding on a course of action as many players do, your PC would be a pile of goo in no time.

6 Don't overanalyze. Making plans while waiting for your turn is a good habit, but analyzing every last detail might not be productive.

Player 1: "Well, if I cast that spell, won't I provoke an attack of opportunity? Where is he? Can he reach me from there? It looks like I'm 3 feet away from him. How many hit points does he still have? Does he—"

Player 2: "For the love of Tempus, you're 10th level and it's one kobold! Just attack it."

It's easy to waste time trying to think of every possibility and completely ignore the obvious. What would you do if you really were the character in the above situation? Would you cast the spell? If an ankheg were looming over you, having already killed your horse, how much time would you spend trying to decide whether you should roll away from it, attack it, or cower and hope it thinks you're dead? If your PC spent as much time deciding on a course of action as many players do, he would be a pile of goo in no time. Pretend it's you in the situation described and react. Don't worry if it's not the statistically best thing you could have done—the game will be more realistic that way. Not only does overanalyzing slow down play, it also ruins the suspension of disbelief that's so important in a game setting.

FOR DMS

Ultimately, it's the DM who is responsible for maintaining the pacing of a game. The following suggestions can help keep the action moving.

7 Don't allow a character to act out of turn. You're in charge of your game, so it's up to you to decide what the characters can and can't do. Players often forget what they wanted to do or think of free actions their characters should have taken after their turns are over—for example, the player of the party rogue might decide after her turn that she wanted to reload her crossbow. You might be tempted to go ahead and allow such afterthoughts as a courtesy to your players, but this sort of generosity can quickly cause the situation to get out of hand. A constant stream of free actions and backup actions mentioned out of turn disrupts the flow of combat and distracts everyone. Soon, no one can remember whose turn was next. Free actions are indeed free, but they

2,284 B.C.E.: The Divine Edict
During his lifetime, Sargon conquers all of Mesopotamia and most of its bordering nations, fighting no fewer than thirty-four wars without a loss. After his death, his children take on the mantle of divinity as part of their ruling power. Their claim of divine heritge allows the Sargonids' to organize and accomplish many great undertakings, both domestically and militarily. However, "divine edicts" also become notorious as excuses for fervent believers to commit incredible atrocities in the names of their deities.

2,250 B.C.E.: The Composite Bow
During the reign of Naram-Sin, the last great ruler of the Sargonid Dynasty, the most devastating weapon yet is developed. Made of bone, wood, and animal sinew, the composite bow is a weapon of incredible power, capable of launching arrows that can punch through an enemy's leather armor at 300 yards. The Sumerians use the composite bow to deadly effect, raising the lethality of mass combat by at least an order of magnitude. Their success ensures that the composite bow has a place in every major conflict for the next two millennia.

2,193 B.C.E.: The Fall of Sumeria
The last Sargonid ruler, Naram-Sin's son, is assassinated. Sumeria crumbles, and the area remains in a constant state of war with no real unity for the next millennium.

The fall of Sumeria and the subsequent dispersal of its people spreads Sumerian culture, customs, and military advancements far and wide. All the civilized regions of the world gain from the knowledge of the fallen empire.

2,000 B.C.E.: The Celtic Migrations
The many peoples later known as the Celts begin migrating from eastern Europe and the Middle East, probably to avoid war in the Mesopotamian region. Trade allows many of these proto-Celtic tribes to absorb Sumerian knowledge and skills, including the secrets of bronzesmithing. Slowly, the barbarian tribes in Europe and Asia begin to fashion superior weapons and become forces to be reckoned with.

must happen on the character's turn. Only if the rules say a particular action can be initiated outside the character's turn should you allow it—and there are precious few such actions.

8 Demonstrate the action. Using miniatures and terrain provides you with an easy way to show players how combat is unfolding. So act out the battle scene for them. Explain to the player exactly what her character sees when the ankheg is looming over her prone body. The better players understand what's going on, the faster they can make decisions about their characters' actions.

Explain to the player exactly what her character sees when the ankheg is looming over her prone body.

9 Push for commitment. Sometimes players just have trouble with commitment, especially when they have a lot of options.

Player 1: "I'm thinking of attacking the wraith with my dagger."

DM: "Roll to see if you hit. Does the dagger have any magical properties?"

Player 1: "No, wait! Maybe I should cast Melf's acid arrow instead."

DM: "OK, roll your attack."

Player 1: "No, no. I'm just thinking about it. How about magic missile instead?"

DM: "Which is it?"

Some players make a habit of speaking their ideas aloud without ever committing to one course of action. Sometimes they do it to feel you out—to see what your reaction is to their suggestions. Other times, they do it because they're really not sure what to do.

Whatever the reason, if the habit gets out of hand, you must be willing to stop it by saying, "OK, that's what you did." However, if you do decide to take this route, be sure to warn your players beforehand that you're going to consider whatever they first say to be what their characters are saying or doing.

Alternatively, you can tell your players that not making a decision in a reasonable amount of time will result in that character spending his or her turn frozen in indecision. Having characters lose turns when their players can't decide on actions is a very harsh solution, though, so consider how bad the problem is and whether your group might respond to a gentler tactic before you implement this one.

10 Don't be afraid to wing it. Don't spend so long looking up a rule that your players have time to run to the local pizza palace for the buffet. If it's not an issue you can resolve quickly, make an on-the-spot decision and stick with it. If you later find out you were wrong, change the rule after the game, or at least after that combat. But don't go back and replay that battle or modify the outcome.

Furthermore, don't let your players argue their rules points into the ground during combat. Such discussions only serve to slow down the game and frustrate those who want to get on with it. Make a house rule that everyone must save rules-lawyering for after the game.

11 Get the players to help you look up rules. If there's a disputed issue and you simply can't come up with an on-the-spot ruling that sounds fair, have all the players pull out their *Player's Handbooks* and *Dungeon Master's Guides* and help you find the answer. Six heads are better than one, and it's likely that someone in your group remembers reading about a specific applicable rule or example at some time. Joint issue resolution is a good way to get your players involved in the game, and it has the added benefit of giving them more exposure to the rules. (Just don't let them bicker if they find conflicting examples.) If you hold enough joint rules searches, your group might not have to look up as many rules in the future.

FOR EVERYONE

The following suggestions apply to everyone at the gaming table, players and DM alike.

12 Come prepared. For a player, adequate preparation means having your character's combat statistics noted in a format that's easy for you to read, having your dice on the table, and having everything you need to play nearby.

For the DM, proper advance preparation means ensuring that all your monsters' statistics are calculated and handy, that you've read the adventure completely, and that you have an approximate idea of what should happen when. Experienced DMs realize that you can never be prepared enough, but the less often you have to hit the books, the more time you can spend grabbing the players' attention with your exciting battles.

1,994 B.C.E.: The First Asian Empire
After thousands of years of intermittent warfare among small settlements, the first dynasty of rulers emerges in Asia. But the Xia Dynasty's hold on its territory is tenuous at best, since constant invasions from barbarians to the north keep its control in constant flux.

Chinese martial innovations begin coming to light, a bit at a time. Eventually the Asians' advancements are shared with nations to the west.

1,900 B.C.E.: The Discovery of Iron
The development of ironworking by the Hittites in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) begins as a modest undertaking. Iron in this era is worth more than gold, so it is used primarily for jewelry at first. Although ironworkers quickly develop the skills to make weapons, iron daggers are considered little more than precious artifacts.

Meanwhile, war rages between the rival Mesopotamian city-states of Babylon and Ashur, and the Hittites are in the thick of it. But despite the deadly politics of the situation and their own warlike dispositions, the Hittites manage to position themselves as traders and build a vast commercial empire that stretches from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean and eastern Europe. Through their trade, they spread many of the advanced weapons of the Mesopotamian region to other parts of the Mediterranean. Through it all, they succeed in keeping the art of ironsmithing a secret.

1,800 B.C.E.: The Bronze Age in Europe
Bronzesmithing now starts to become commonplace in Europe. The weapons created in this part of the world are substandard compared with those made in the Middle East, but the skill of the European bronzesmiths continues to evolve.

The impact of the Bronze Age's arrival in Europe is as profound as it was in the Middle East. The use of bronze for tools and weapons allows the tribes of Europe to organize, grow more civilized, and become deadlier opponents.

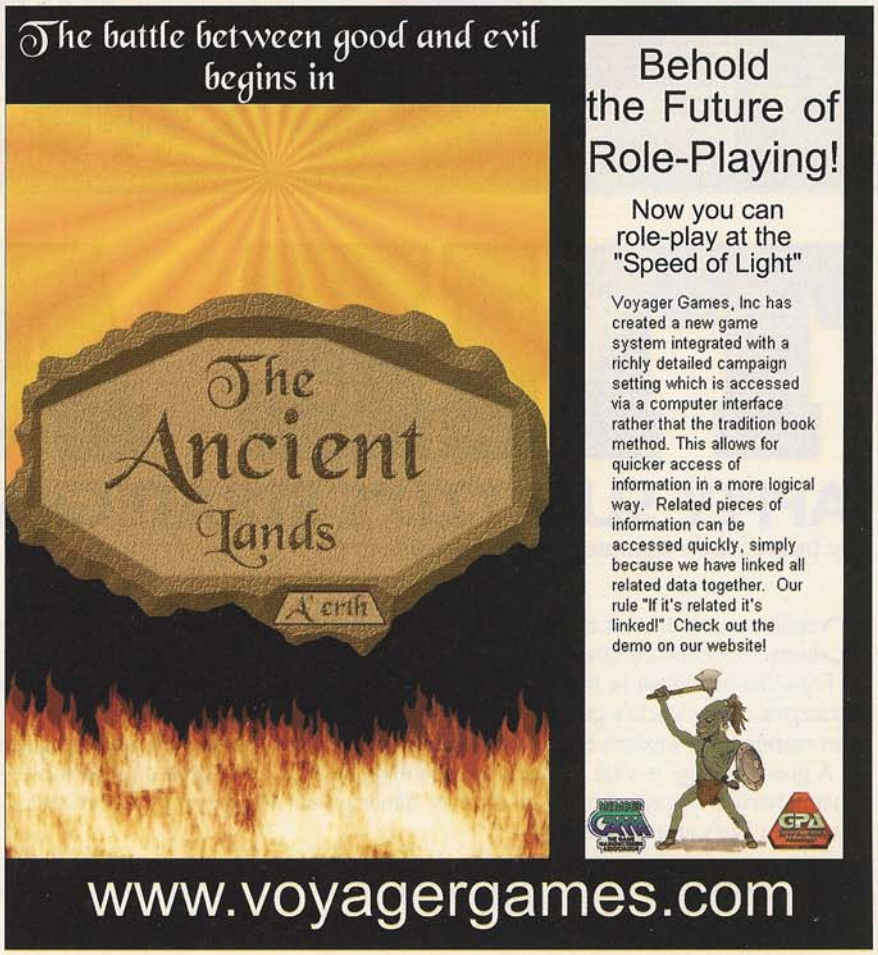
13 Roll attack and damage dice at the same time. This technique might not seem very valuable, but making both die rolls at once cuts out a surprising amount of time. DMs in particular benefit greatly from this technique, since they often have to roll attacks for multiple creatures at once. Players too can cut the time needed to resolve attacks this way. Of course, knowing that your character missed becomes all the worse when you see that he would have caused maximum damage had he only scored a hit.

14 Remember the Golden Rule. Try to eliminate habits that distract other players, such as compulsive dice rolling. Don't get up from the table right before your turn unless it's an emergency. Turn off your cell phone. In other words, treat your fellow players as you would like to be treated.

15 If all else fails, use a timer. If everyone takes an excessively long time to finish their turns, a timer can speed things along without forcing the DM to decide arbitrarily when each player's time is up. If you haven't made a decision by the time the timer rings, your character stands around for that turn, uncertain what to do. The amount of time allotted to each player should be fair but not unduly long. It isn't necessary to limit everyone to 6 seconds just because that's the length of a round; the average player does need more time than that to come up with a plan of action. Start with 30 seconds per player and add or subtract time as needed until everyone is comfortable with the system.

Although it sounds eminently fair, timing combat rounds should be a last resort. Whether you use a stopwatch hidden behind the DM's screen or an hourglass set out for everyone to see, people always feel pressured when such a system is in place. Furthermore, most people make more mistakes when they know they're being timed than they would otherwise.

Discontinue any of these techniques that they end up decreasing the fun of the game. This final suggestion is the most important one of all. None of these techniques are worth using if they make everyone miserable. If the group truly enjoys committee-style combat, keep it. If the players insist that they must be able to speak while their characters are unconscious, then so be it. D&D is a game, and as such the important issue is whether everyone is having fun. And that means everyone—both the person who enjoys analyzing his character's every move and the one who doesn't like to wait 45 minutes for her next turn. The trick is to find a middle ground where everyone can enjoy the game. D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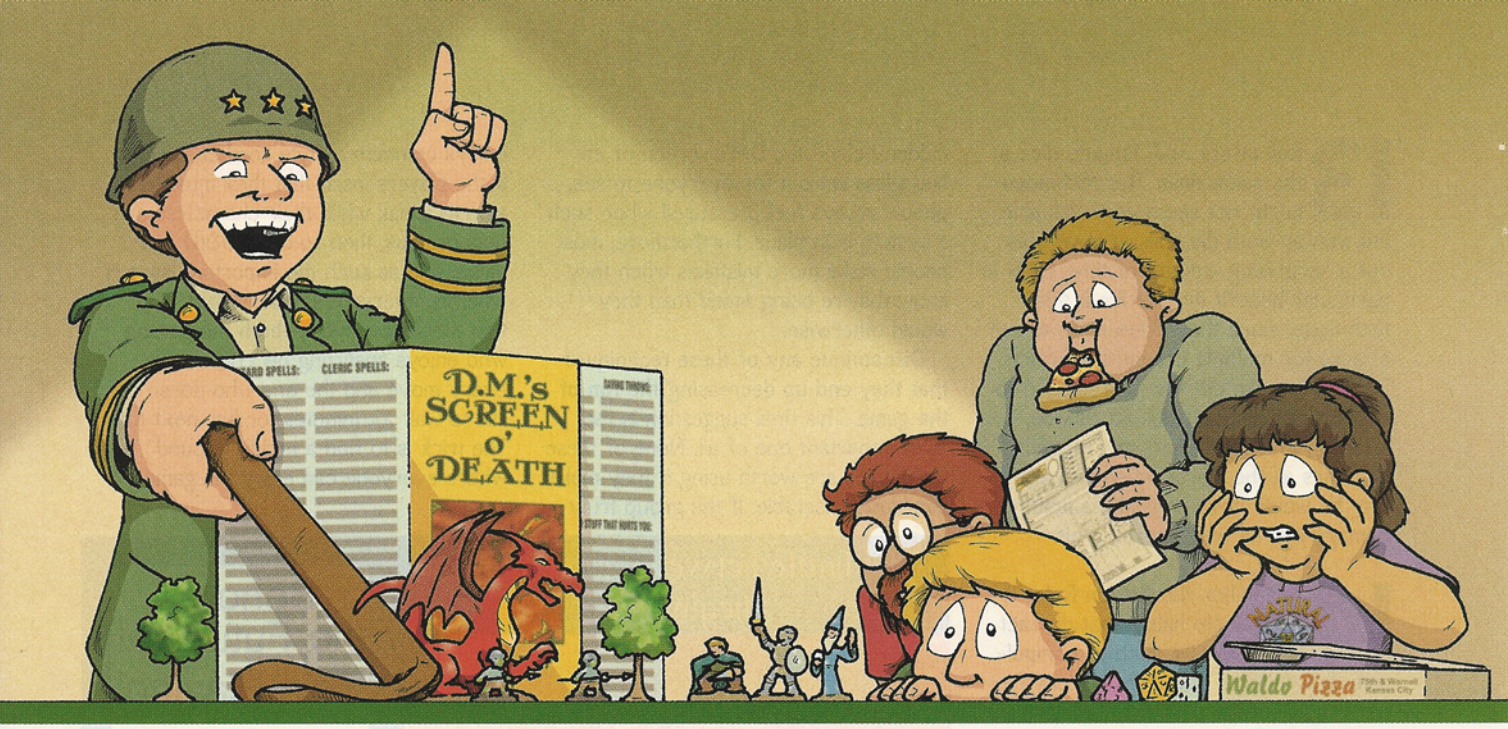
1,740 B.C.E.: The Fall of the Middle Kingdom The Egyptian Empire's natural borders have prevented invasions for more than a thousand years. With only minor uprisings inside its own borders to challenge its armies, Egypt has had no reason to upgrade its military prowess. The soldiers who make up its infantry wear no armor and are still armed primarily with simple bows, stone maces, stone axes, and a precious few bronze weapons. Peace has made Egypt ripe for conquest.

Sweeping down from Canaan in the Middle East, the Hyksos invade Lower Egypt from the north. The invaders wear the best bronze and leather armor of the era and wield penetrating axes and short bronze swords. Their tactics have been forged in the pressure cooker of Mesopotamia. Most importantly, they ride in single-axle war chariots lined with quivers of arrows and use composite bows that can kill Egyptian infantry at three times the range of the antiquated Egyptian simple bow. The maneuverability of the chariots on the flat battlefields of Egypt proves to be the downfall of the Egyptian troops, who are unable to engage or return fire against their attackers. The Middle Kingdom falls, and the face of Egypt is forever changed.

1,600 B.C.E.: The Rise of the Mycenaeans On the Greek peninsula, the Mycenaeans build a vast commercial empire and an advanced culture. Their military power is substandard compared to that of their Mesopotamian neighbors, but because of their central location, they manage to dominate the area. Using routes established in building their vast trading empire, they begin to spread their culture, often by force, throughout the northern Mediterranean region.

Mycenaean soldiers are outfitted with bronze armor and spears and carry large, round shields called hoplons. The soldiers themselves become known as hoplites, after these shields.



THE ART

APPLY SUN TZU'S STRATEGIES TO YOUR GAME

by Dean Poisso • illustrated by Aaron Williams

Conflict is at the heart of any good D&D campaign. Those who engage in conflict need shrewd strategies, and there is no better textbook on strategy than *The Art of War.*

From the battlefield to the boardroom, *The Art of War,* a treatise by the ancient master of warfare Sun Tzu, has shaped the strategies of the world's greatest leaders for more than two millennia. Its simple yet subtle lessons spell victory for all who can master their wisdom. Even today, this landmark work remains the ultimate guide to strategy.

A good strategy is vital to any armed conflict, be it an epic battle or a skirmish with orcs. Whether you're a DM hurling enemy hordes into epic battles or a player dancing your PC through the intricacies of court intrigue, you too can benefit from Sun Tzu's strategic lessons.

Below are some key points from *The Art of War,* along with discussions of how each might apply to a D&D campaign. Sun Tzu's ancient wisdom beckons. Once you learn the art of D&D, the campaign is yours.

1,570 B.C.E.: The Egyptian New Kingdom

Rather than submit to the domination of the Hyksos, the noble families of Thebes in Upper Egypt form an alliance and retaliate against their conquerors. Their superior numbers and bold aggression finally oust the Hyksos from Egypt, and the New Kingdom is established. Fearful now of further invasions, the Egyptians embark upon a campaign of conquest utilizing some of the weaponry and tactics they picked up from the Hyksos. Egypt rises as an immensely powerful military machine, with armies numbering 100,000 or more troops. Maintaining forces of such magnitude is possible only because of the Egyptians' incredibly advanced logistical corps and record-keepers, who are charged with keeping the army well groomed for battle and properly outfitted.

1,512 B.C.E.: The Egyptian Chariot

Pharaoh Thutmose II expands the Egyptian holdings, creating a buffer region of conquered satellite nations around the heart of the empire. This buffer region functions as a shield against foreign invasion.

Egypt's military forces are now disciplined and seasoned. The armies make good tactical use of the chariot, and chariot units are considered elite branches of the military machine. The swift, two-wheeled Egyptian chariots serve primarily as mobile archery platforms, but they are also used to move heavy infantry to the battlefield. Despite Egypt's new reliance on chariots, the infantry remains the backbone of its army.

1,504 B.C.E.: Military Divisions

Thutmose III, the greatest warlord of all the pharaohs, introduces revolutionary new military practices. Families begin sending their sons to military schools, thereby creating the first professional caste of soldiers and officers. One in every ten men is conscripted for military service. Soldiers are outfitted with all the implements of the Hyksos military, including bronze scale armor, helmets, composite bows, sickle swords, and penetrating axes.

ON ASSESSING STRATEGIES

An effective strategy is the key to success in any military venture, no matter how small the scale. Several of Sun Tzu's most important lessons on strategy can easily be applied to your D&D campaign.

"Military action is important to the nation—it is the ground of life and death, the path of survival and destruction, so it is important that we examine it."

The point might seem elementary, but when you know a battle is about to take place, scout out the territory first. Know the layout of the room in which you plan to stage an ambush. Study the terrain of the field where two armies will clash. If you just wait around for your enemy to show up rather than learning the lay of the land, an experienced DM can (and probably will) use your lack of preparation against you.

Don't forget to plan escape routes while you're scouting out the terrain. A way out can mean the difference between a handful of light wounds and a total party kill. A quick and easy path to escape is especially important for plodding tanks in full plate who need time to disengage.

"A military operation involves deception. Even though you are competent, appear incompetent. Even though you are effective, appear ineffective."

It's far better to be underestimated by your enemies than to be overestimated. There is rarely a need to advertise your success, and it's usually better not to. Strutting around in magic armor and picking your teeth with a *+4 dagger* might look impressive, but it's also an invitation for the local cutthroats to part you from your extravagant goods. Enemies are easily gained; you don't need to advertise for more by flaunting your valuables. Such arrogance begs for a lesson in humility—a lesson your DM will doubtless be more than happy to provide.

"When you're going to attack nearby, make it look as if you're going to go a long way; when you're going to attack far away, make it look as if you're going just a short distance."

Your well-planned attack should come as a surprise to your enemy. If the local orcs think you're headed across the swamp to hammer their lizardfolk neighbors, they'll be caught with their loincloths down when you storm their encampment instead. The corollary to this law, of course, is that you must keep a close eye on your enemies, even as they keep their eyes on you.

"Draw them in with the prospect of gain; take them by confusion."

If you know your enemies are greedy (and let's face it, most are), you can lure them in with the false promise of easy victory and lucrative spoils. You get the pleasure of outsmarting your foes and the added bonus of having their loot delivered to your doorstep. But remember that greed never pays—unless you have the biggest sword.

"When they are fulfilled, be prepared against them; when they are strong, avoid them."

Be wary when your enemies have shared aims because they might join forces for mutual benefit. Learn to look for the telltale signs that joint plans are afoot. When the usual squabbles among the local goblinoids or thugs are absent and evidence of leadership appears, it's time to "gird thy loins," as a wise man once said.

If your enemies' alliance becomes too powerful, it's time to head for greener pastures. Wait until the enemies let down their guard before you go charging in, spells blazing and swords swinging.

"Use anger to throw them into disarray."

Get your enemies steamed enough to make mistakes. Why do you think the Bluff skill makes a rogue so deadly? She's not making fun of your mother because she's in a bad mood—she's

OF D&D

The army is further divided according to weapon type. Separate units of archers and infantry appear, as well as the elite chariot corps. In command of each division is an officer who also sits on a council that advises the pharaoh—the first such advisory council in history. Backed by the first intelligence corps and a competent logistical bureaucracy, the Egyptian army of Thutmose III resembles in many ways the armies that will arise in Europe and America many thousands of years later.

1,469 B.C.E.: The First Recorded Battle

Seeking to expand the Egyptian Empire into Canaan, Pharaoh Thutmose III leads his army to the ancient city of Meggido, a fortified city overlooking a vital trade route that stretches from Egypt to the Mesopotamian river valley. After sending out advance scouts, Thutmose negotiates 250 miles of desert and foothills with an army of more than 23,000 men, but his forces remain undetected until the final 10 miles of the journey.

Upon reaching the mountains near Meggido, Thutmose III must choose from three possible routes. Two are easily traveled and relatively short; the third is a narrow, bottlenecked trail through Aruna Pass. Not imagining that Thutmose would endanger his entire army by moving through the pass, the Canaanites split their forces to fortify the most obvious routes.

Scouts tell Thutmose that Canaanite armies guard the shorter and easier routes but the longer and more dangerous route remains empty. The pharaoh takes a calculated risk and marches his troops through Aruna Pass. The narrow road through the foothills leaves his army stretched across the entire length of the valley, virtually undefended, during the journey. But because the Canaanites have left this one access unfortified, Thutmose manages to move his entire army undetected to Meggido. By the time the Canaanites realize their error, the pharaoh and his armies are waiting for them outside their own city.

The two forces clash outside the gates of Meggido, and the pharaoh's armies quickly

setting you up for a sneak attack while her comrade moves in to flank you.

Anger makes people reckless and causes them to do stupid things. It's no accident that when a barbarian rages, it's not his Intelligence and Wisdom scores that go up. Use this nugget of wisdom in the game and avoid being used by it.

"Use humility to make them haughty."

Never believe a known rogue. Attack her before she fools you into thinking she's your friend. She's not. Remember this formula: Rogues + Bluff = Death. Watch out though; DMs love to use this one on players too.

"Tire them by flight."

Don't make an enemy of a monk; you'll never catch her. When you try, the DM will make you attempt Fortitude saves against exhaustion, whereupon the spry monk will feed you a knuckle sandwich.

Speed is deadly. Take advantage of slower opponents by using feats such as Run. Try to wear your foes to the ground.

ON DOING BATTLE

The battlefield is where causes are won or lost. *The Art of War* offers several pieces of advice that are useful during an actual engagement.

"When you do battle, even if you're winning, if you continue for a long time it will dull your forces and blunt your edge; if you besiege a citadel, your strength will be exhausted."

Prepare for the worst at all times, and protect your party cleric at all costs. The longer you spend in the field, the more likely it is that you'll be depleted of critical equipment or health. If you insist on attacking despite exhaustion, low hit points, and a lack of spellcasting reserves, do your party a favor—try to die in a place where your friends can easily find your body and scavenge your remaining gear.

"Therefore, I have heard of military operations that were clumsy but swift, but I have never seen one that was skillful and lasted a long time."

Hit fast and hit hard. Don't try to prolong the fight—use every tactic in the book, dirty or otherwise, to end the conflict quickly. Long fights cost more in the long run, and clerics don't come cheap.

"Those who use the military skillfully do not raise troops twice and provide food three times."

Don't attack unless you know you can win. Continuing to attack without regrouping after an initial failure is asking for defeat.

"By taking equipment from your own country but feeding off the enemy, you can be sufficient in both arms and provisions. Therefore, a wise general strives to feed off the enemy."

When you defeat your foes, scavenge. Scavenge hard. Scavenge everything you can carry. You never know how useful a scavenged item might prove down the road—and you can always sell it later if you can't use it.

"Those who are near the army sell at high prices. Because of high prices, the wealth of the common people is exhausted."

Take the time to shop for equipment from common merchants. Spreading the wealth among the common folk is a good way to make a name for your party locally. Avoid patronizing expensive merchants to meet your basic needs—unless, of course, you have a good rogue in your group.

"What kills the enemy is anger; what gets his goods is reward."

There is no better incentive to kill your enemy than his loot. Take it and rejoice.

"The important thing in combat is victory, not persistence."

If you must fight, fight to win. Few warriors who fight for the fun of it live long enough to achieve greatness. Those who do are probably chaotic evil and doomed to die soon anyway.

ON PLANNING A SIEGE

A siege is generally a poor choice of strategy, but if you cannot avoid doing it, at least do it well.

"The superior militarist strikes while schemes are being laid."

If you're lucky enough to catch your opponents while they're still making their plans, attack immediately. You can then add "Superior Militarist" to your titles.

This rule is a no-brainer for rogues. A sneak attack can spell the difference between a quick encounter and a no-holds-barred fight to the death. Take advantage of the opportunities your opponents leave open.

"The next best thing is to attack your enemies' allies."

If your enemies' leader appears too powerful to take on by yourself, attack her henchmen instead. Hopefully you can beat the henchmen so badly that the leader will think you pose a significant threat and back down. If not, at least you won't have to deal with more than one opponent pounding on you at once.

"The lowest is to attack a city. Siege of a city is done only as a last resort."

overcome the native opposition. The citizens of Meggido throw ropes to the fleeing Canaanite soldiers and pull them up the walls of the city.

Instead of immediately moving against the city, Thutmose takes the time to loot the ravaged Canaanite army. This delay allows Meggido time to prepare for a lengthy siege. Seven months later, the city finally bows to Egyptian pressure and surrenders.

1,450 B.C.E.: Treachery in the Aegean

The rising power of the Mycenaeans leads them to attack their allies, the Minoans of Crete. The Mycenaeans' military and financial power overwhelms the Minoans, resulting in the decline and eventual destruction of their society and culture.

The Mycenaean confederation of city-states continues to spread its influence through the Mediterranean. Its trade empire stretches to the Hittite Empire in the east, to Egypt in the south, and to the European mainland in the west, along the Italian peninsula. Further conquest and colonization of the northern Mediterranean region spreads the Mycenaean way of warfare to those areas, where it will later be adopted by both the Greeks and the Romans.

1,340 B.C.E.: Birth of Assyria

The city-state of Ashur gains its independence from the Kingdom of Mittani. In alliance with the Hittites, Ashur declares war upon Mittani and triumphs, conquering much of northeastern Mesopotamia. The new empire, called Assyria, has a refined culture that incorporates many characteristics of the older Sumerian Empire.

While Mesopotamia struggles to balance itself among the warring factions of the Hittites, the Babylonians, the Elamites, and the Kassites, Assyria manages to hold its own among them all by virtue of its strong bureaucracy and military. Even so, its resources are strained to the limits in protecting the nation from invasion. This chaotic atmosphere helps to stimulate new developments in traditional

Laying siege to a city should mean you have already exhausted all other means of taking control. This tactic is the choice of last resort because valuable loot will be lost beneath the rubble of battle—loot that could otherwise be yours. The only time you should lay siege to any fortified target is when there is no other way to get in.

"When civil leadership is ignorant of military matters but shares equally in the government of the armies, soldiers get confused."

A nonwarrior should never dictate how warriors engage in combat. Likewise, a fighter is never in a good position to tell a wizard how to toss her spells.

"Invincibility is in oneself; vulnerability is in the opponent."

When you openly cart around a lot of magic items, you might force opponents to attack you just out of greed. Engaging you purely for gain puts attackers at a disadvantage, because when you see that they're assessing your wealth and considering an attack, you can beat them to it. If you know all the functions of your gear and have a clear understanding of your own capabilities, you can be ready for nearly any situation.

"It is said that victory can be discerned but not manufactured."

Any character who claims he can manufacture victory either plays with a DM named Monty Hall or possesses an incredibly powerful artifact that will inevitably be stolen, destroyed, or ripped from his dying hands. A good player knows his character's capabilities and weaknesses and acts accordingly.

"Defense is for times of insufficiency; attack is for times of surplus."

Whenever you're without armor, there is nothing you want more than defensive capability. You'd even be willing to tie branches and bedrolls to your body if it would get you a few more points of AC. Conversely, when your party's ranger has done nothing but whittle arrows day and night, how can you not want to use them up on enemies? Never let an unfired arrow go to waste. When you have good health, good equipment, and available opponents, it's time to attack!

"In ancient times, those known as good warriors prevailed when it was easy to prevail."

Don't attack unless you know you can win.

Always take a competent bard along on an expedition. If you don't have one, hire one to accompany you. The benefits are legion: If you and your comrades kill a small rock lizard, your names will be sung in innumerable taverns as the slayers of mighty dragons. If you run off a half-orc beggar at the outskirts of the village, your bard will turn the scuffle into an epic tale involving the defeat of an entire orc horde.

Prevailing when it's easy is great for public relations. Such victories build your reputation, allow the artistic bard to hone her skills, and provide a night of dazzling entertainment for those unfortunates who do not possess the ability scores it takes to be an adventurer. Everyone benefits.

ON FORCE

Force works best when applied against weak points and not spread too thinly. Finding your enemy's weak point is always worth the effort it takes.

"Good warriors seek effectiveness in battle from the force of momentum, not from individual people; therefore, they are able to choose people and let momentum do its work."

A battle has its own tempo, and the successful warrior is the one who moves with the momentum of his own troops. Thus, a fighter should always concentrate on pushing toward the most powerful foe. Such a tactic gives his comrades a focal point on which to concentrate their firepower. When you split the focus of the group, especially by fighting alone, your party loses momentum and risks defeat. In the heat of battle, such an action is the equivalent of crowd surfing with swords.

"Making the armies able to take on opponents without being defeated is a matter of unorthodox and orthodox methods. In battle, confrontation is done directly, but victory is gained by surprise."

Do not commit your group to a full, head-on assault. Always launch surprise attacks from the flank. A round lost so that your rogues can properly commit to a sneak attack is usually well worth it. Likewise, a spellcaster should search for a good vantage point from which to launch attacks. Remember, meeting opponents head-on is a predictable action, and predictability equals death.

"To unfailingly take what you attack, you must attack where there is no defense."

Always attack your opponents where they are least alert. If they are alert on all sides, make them fear for the safety

strategies and tactics. The Assyrians take advantage of all available knowledge in warfare (and nonmilitary disciplines as well), refining their armor, weaponry, and even the mundane sundries of the average soldier wherever possible. Taken together, these small changes greatly improve the combat prowess of the Assyrian soldiers, making them the most feared troops on any battlefield during the late Bronze Age.

THE IRON AGE

The advent of ironworking is a major turning point in the evolution of warfare. Bronze weaponsmithing is by necessity restricted to those regions that possess not only the understanding of the process but also the necessary materials. While copper is fairly common worldwide, tin is not; thus, many cultures have no access to the raw materials needed to create bronze. Iron ore, on the other hand, is both plentiful and evenly distributed through much of the world.

Like the Bronze Age before it, the Iron Age begins in different cultures at different times, but once the technique of forging iron ore (and later, of alloying the iron with carbon to make steel) becomes known, the face of warfare changes dramatically.

Iron blades are far stronger than their bronze counterparts and can pierce bronze armor with relative ease. Because of iron's relative abundance and low cost, smaller nations can now afford to outfit their soldiers with deadly weaponry for the first time in history. The use of iron weapons ushers in the bloodiest age or warfare yet.

1,300 B.C.E.: The Advent of Iron

The Hittites learn the art of cold-forging iron into weaponry. While imperfect, the process leads to another important discovery—that applying carbon from the charcoal in the smelters to an iron blade creates a layer of steel around it. Once again, the Hittites manage to keep the manufacture of their weaponry relatively secret, thus gaining a huge advantage over their enemies.

of one quarter, then launch a full assault on another. Rogues are perfect for carrying out such feinting maneuvers.

Deception is the root of versatility in any conflict. For example, you might initially target the opposition's warriors in order to draw in their cleric, then commence the real attack on the hapless healer. If the defenders have barricaded themselves in a place of safety, convince them that they have a chance to come out and defeat you, or force them to defend a different place than they had planned.

"Therefore when you want to do battle, even if the opponent is entrenched in a defensive position, he will be unable to avoid fighting you if you attack where he will surely come to the rescue."

When planning to assail a person or group in a defensive position, you must strike at the points that give the enemy no choice but to engage you. For example, if you know that orcs tend to protect their women and children, feign an attack against such targets to draw the orcs out. When battling a defensive force, destroy its supply lines. Such an action forces the defenders to engage you or suffer the consequences of deprivation. If your opponent is in hiding, abduct her allies, underlings, friends, and family to make her come to their aid.

Of course, the ruthless nature of these tactics makes it likely that your enemies will attack your stronghold. Wait for them patiently. They will come to you.

ON ARMED STRUGGLE

Your party's success or failure depends on what happens before, during, and after the fight. Knowing how to gather the right party and where and how you should attack is vital, but knowing how to gather and hold on to the spoils after the battle is just as important.

"Unless you know the mountains and forests, the defiles and impasses, the lay of the swamps and marshes, you cannot maneuver with armed force. Unless you use local guides, you cannot get the advantages of the land."

A good ranger is worth his weight in gold. Learning your enemy's home terrain can be a risky gamble, but if you understand her territory, you can learn her habits and deduce which paths she might take to move from one location to another. Armed with such information, you can strike when your enemy is at her weakest.

Get a local to show you around. If you're dealing with goblinoids or similar creatures, capture one and force him to talk. If you're kind, he might even serve as a guide. But remember that goblinoids are a treacherous lot, so keep a blade handy at all times.

"Military force is established by deception, motivated by gain, and adapted by division and combination. Therefore, when it moves swiftly, it is like the wind. When it moves slowly, it is like the forest; it is as rapacious as fire and as immovable as the mountains."

When forming a party for the specific purpose of eliminating a person or an enemy force, you must remain secretive about it. Be discreet in your preparations, be nondescript in your mannerisms, and meet your allies in the shadows, away from prying eyes.

The motivations for assembling a strong party need not be noble in the beginning. The promise of a mutual enemy's destruction or the looting of his coffers can be enough to tie a band of adventurers together. What makes a party strong is its ability to anticipate most outcomes but still adapt to unexpected circumstances. While not every skill needs to be represented, a successful adventuring band possesses a wide variety of abilities from which to choose.

"To plunder a locality, divide your troops. To expand your territory, divide the spoils."

It's easiest to grab the best items in a hoard if the entire party works together. The same rule goes for looting a town—it's easier to round up the spoils if everyone pillages the location simultaneously. It's also faster, which is an important consideration if the occupants are away but could return at any time.

If you actually want to claim the territory in question, you need to leave it in the hands of people you can trust. Fortunately, contrary to popular belief, you can buy loyalty. One proven method is to leave the caretakers some of the loot you pillaged. The average low-level adventuring NPC is lucky to make a few gold pieces per month, so the promise of even a meager portion of real treasure can quickly turn him from an indifferent hireling into a willing guard.

"So when confronting the enemy, you should take away the energy of their armies and take away the hearts of their generals."

In the heat of battle, nothing is more demoralizing to enemies than ripping out the heart of their general. Try it and see. *"The rule for armed struggle is never to face a high hill, and never oppose those whose backs are to a high hill. A surrounded army must be given a way out."*

Backing your foes into a corner is always dangerous. When they have nowhere to go, they have no choice but to fight to the death. Unless you're trying

1,290 B.C.E.: The Battle of Kadesh

The Egyptian Empire pushes into Canaan in a bid to expand its power into western Asia. The Egyptian forces descend in three parts on the city of Kadesh, with Ramses III leading the first division along the Orontes River. After patrolling the area briefly, his scouts report that the Hittites are far away, near the city. Certain of his impending success, Ramses makes camp along the river to wait for two rear divisions.

The patrol's sketchy reconnaissance, however, proves completely inaccurate. Alerted to the presence of the invaders, the Hittite forces are actually only a few miles away, easing around to the flank and rear of the Egyptian encampment. They strike with complete surprise. The outnumbered Egyptian division fights with discipline despite being caught unaware, but the Hittites' superior weaponry inflicts severe casualties. Ramses III is forced to retreat, with Hittite charioteers harassing his troops all the way.

Just when destruction of Ramses seems imminent, the second division arrives, and the Hittites find themselves fighting for their lives. Now outnumbered, the Hittites pull defensively into a retreat, trailing carnage in their wake. The Egyptians reform their line despite losses.

In the end, Ramses is unable to take Kadesh and is forced to sign a peace agreement with King Muwatallis of the Hittites—the first such agreement ever recorded. Despite this setback, Ramses III claims victory for the battle.

From this point on, the Hittites have little difficulty fending off the Egyptians. The Battle of Kadesh marks the end of Egyptian expansion into Canaan and Mesopotamia and the beginning of the Egyptian Empire's decline.

1,220 B.C.E.: The Trojan War

A confederation of Mycenaean city-states launches a massive attack on the Anatolian city of Troy. The ensuing Trojan War marks the Mycenaeans' greatest military achievement. Tales of the Trojan War will be passed down through oral tradition and song for the next 800 years before they are immortalized by the poet Homer in the *Iliad*.

to commit genocide, it's always best to let your enemies escape in a direction of your choice. While they flee, you can cut down as many of them as you see fit, usually without exposing yourself and your companions to attack. Of course, if you've planned your attack carefully, you've placed a few nice traps along the enemies' escape route to hinder them even further.

The advantages and disadvantages of hills are well known to the strategist. Never fight uphill—it's tiring, and your opponent gets a +1 bonus (for higher ground) on her attack rolls against you. Never cede any advantage to your enemy if you can possibly help it.

"The individualist without strategy who takes opponents lightly will inevitably become the captive of others."

Characters who have no loyalty to their leaders, whether inside the party or out, are doomed. A small group requires participation from all of its members. If you remain a rugged individualist, you constantly operate outside the working structure of the group. By simply reacting to each encounter on your own terms, you set yourself up for individual attack by association—that is, you count as one of those allies that an enemy should try to attack if the main target is too tough (see above).

If you aren't killed for your indifference, eventually your own party will be forced to lock you up. Once the rest of your party has become successful and gained responsibilities, you will no longer be trusted—in fact, you'll be seen as a liability. If you're lucky, you might wake up in shackles; if you're not so lucky, you might not wake up at all.

"Look upon your soldiers as infants and they will go into deep valleys with you. Look upon them like beloved children and they will willingly die for you."

Treat your henchmen and followers as if they were PCs, and they will fight tooth and nail for you. Outfitting them with that extra loot instead of selling it could save your life one day, whereas the extra gold you get from selling it could prove the death of you when someone decides to kill you for it.

"Even those who dislike each other, if in the same boat, will help one another out if in trouble.

Paladins and rogues can get along just fine within a party. They do not have to be best friends or even speak with one another cordially, although many do.

A good ranger is worth his weight in gold.

What makes a group strong is the ability of its members to find common ground. In a state of war, even enemies become allies in the face of a greater threat.

ON THE USE OF SPIES

The best strategies are based on a firm understanding of the enemy's desires and capabilities. The proper use of espionage can get that information for you, but the life of a spy is far from easy.

"No one in the armed forces is treated as familiarly as are spies, no one is given rewards as rich as those given to spies, and no matter is more secret than espionage. Therefore, if an item of intelligence is heard before a spy reports it, then both the spy and the one who reported it die."

It pays to be a rogue. Stealing secrets and reporting them to the powers that be is the bread and butter of the class, but if you choose to make your living as a spy, never allow another person to learn something that you don't already know. The moment that happens, you become obsolete. Your job security is guaranteed by your performance, so make the most of it.

As with most endeavors, payment for spying is commensurate with success. For good information, you're guaranteed riches and benefits; for failure, the only reward is death.

AND LASTLY . . .

The most important aspect of campaigning, whether in the real world or in a D&D game, is choosing your battles wisely.

"A government should not mobilize an army out of anger; military leaders should not provoke war out of wrath. Act when it is beneficial, desist if it is not. Anger can revert to joy, wrath can revert to delight, but a nation destroyed cannot be restored to existence, and the dead cannot be restored to life."

Use force only when necessary, not simply for revenge. If you do otherwise, you become the enemy. It is easy to argue that orcs should be killed on sight simply for being orcs, but to advocate genocide makes you no better than the orcs themselves. Of course, if you readily admit that you're no better than an orc, your mindless brutality is likely to take care of itself in the long run—probably in a permanent fashion.

1,200 B.C.E.: The Sea Peoples

Few details are recorded about the invasion of the Sea Peoples, a loose pirate confederacy of Aegean seafarers, Libyans, and Phoenicians. Nevertheless, this series of events precipitates several profound changes in the Mediterranean and Mesopotamian regions.

In the course of their migrations, the seafaring barbarians known as the Sea People spill into the Mycenaean Empire, utterly disrupting the delicate balance of power between its city-states. Unable to organize swiftly enough to repel the invaders, the empire falls within a hundred years, plunging the region into a dark age of stagnation.

The Sea Peoples eventually land in Palestine and push both north and south. The Hittite Empire, weakened from internal wars against the rising power of Assyria and extended conflict with Egypt, begins to crumble under the onslaught of these new invaders. Mesopotamian trade is disrupted, damaging the Hittites still further. Seizing the advantage, the Assyrians attack, conquering much of the Hittites' land and taking thousands of Hittites as slaves. The Hittite Empire collapses under the combined assault.

The secrect of ironworking spreads throughout Anatolia and the Middle East through Hittite refugees, who eventually become assimilated into the surrounding cultures. Iron weapons gain popularity in every nation where they are introduced.

1,198 B.C.E.: The Turning Point for Egypt

The Sea Peoples extend their raiding southward into Egypt. Ramses III leads the Egyptian forces against the invaders. The Egyptian army avoids annihilation by a narrow margin but loses control of Palestine. The Sea Peoples who settle in the conquered land are a mixture of Phoenicians, Israelites, and Mycenaeans. Egypt's unsuccessful military efforts and many court intrigues accelerate its decline. It never fully recovers.

WAR SPELLS

UNLEASH ARCANE ARMAGEDDON

by Sean K Reynolds · illustrated by Mike Vilardi

Legends abound of wizards single-handedly burning entire armies to ash, sinking islands, carving passes through mountains, or raising legions of the dead. Druids create volcanoes, evil priests infect entire cities with mummy rot, and holy champions of good banish fiends from every corner of the world. What few realize is that although magic of this scale normally requires a spellcaster of significant experience, methods do exist for accomplishing such wonders with less power, albeit in a limited fashion.

While many spells in the *Player's Handbook* (such as *fireball, lightning bolt, cloudkill,* and *meteor swarm*), are suitable for use in large battles, true scholars of the arcane recognize a small group of specialized spells created specifically for military use. These so-called war spells are difficult to cast and require expensive components, but they also affect many more creatures and much greater areas than other spells of the same levels do. A war spell has the war descriptor and requires specialized knowledge to cast (see Casting War Spells, below). Although "war" is not a school or subschool of magic, there are spellcasters who choose to focus their arcane studies on war spells, just as there are those who prefer fire magic of all kinds and those who focus on spells that call upon evil powers or darkness.

WHAT MAKES A SPELL A WAR SPELL?

A war spell is more complex than a conventional spell of the same spell level, and its effects are correspondingly greater in magnitude. While a typical conventional spell affects an area no greater than about 1,200 square feet (a 20-foot-radius spread at ground level, such as a *fireball* would produce), a war spell typically affects about 10,000 square feet (approximately a 60-foot-radius spread at ground level, or a square 100 feet on a side).

While significant increases in scale can be accomplished via metamagic feats (such as Widen Spell, which increases a spell's numeric measurements by 100% at a cost of +3 spell levels), even this technique cannot usually make a conventional spell match a war spell in scale. For example, a *fireball* widened to a 40-foot-radius spread would be a 6th-level spell (3rd-level spell +3 levels), but its area still falls well short of the 60-foot-radius spread typical for a war spell.

War spells achieve their dramatic increases in scale through several means. Most require complex rituals that significantly increase the casting times, as well as elaborate and expensive material components to harness the necessary magical energy. Despite having a dramatically increased area and range, a war spell is usually close to the spell level of a similar conventional spell. For example, the war spell *rolling fire* is very similar to *flaming sphere* except on a larger scale, and yet *rolling fire* is only one level higher than its conventional counterpart.

CASTING WAR SPELLS

The acquisition and casting of a spell with the war descriptor requires spe-

1,000 B.C.E.: Siege Warfare and Cavalry
Assyria, now one of the dominant powers in Mesopotamia, begins a campaign of conquest. Its struggle for supremacy ebbs and flows for two centuries, but its military leaders make enormous strides in the development of new strategies and technologies.

During this period, the Assyrians develop the first mechanical siege weapon—the wheeled battering ram. They also introduce the use of cavalry in warfare, although the first cavalry units achieve only limited effectiveness because the lack of stirrups makes riders too unstable to use their weapons to best advantage. Thus, infantry remains the dominant force on the battlefield.

859 B.C.E.: Mounted Infantry
Under the leadership of Ashunasirpal II, Assyria conquers northern Mesopotamia and the other lands between there and the Mediterranean Sea. His ruthlessness toward those who oppose him becomes legendary as he orders mass beheadings, flaying of enemies, and the impaling of whole cities.

The Assyrian military is now the greatest in the world. Ashunasirpal's troops use iron sickle swords and bronze armor, and their chariot wheels are protected with bronze and copper armor. But it is one of their simpler advancements—the closed-toe boot—that proves integral to their success. Other armies of this era wear open sandals, which are prone to wear, leave the foot open to damage in combat, and are useless in rough weather and harsh terrain. The closed-toe boots of the Assyrian soldiers allow them to march in any conditions, bringing war to their enemies where it is least expected.

For the first time in history, a truly integrated army takes the field. The Assyrian military includes all the elements of a modern army: infantry, archers acting as ranged support, war chariots acting as mobile assault platforms and transports for heavy infantry, and cavalry units acting as mobile skirmishers. A superb logistical corps, complete with weaponsmiths and mobile repair teams for chariots, backs the military divisions to create the most fearsome force to date.

cialized knowledge in the form of the War Magic Study feat. A spellcaster with this feat may acquire war spells as if they were normal spells of the same spell levels (that is, a wizard may choose war spells as the two free spells she gains at each level, or she may research them or acquire them from scrolls; bards and sorcerers use their normal slots for spells known; clerics acquire them by prayer, and so forth). A caster with the War Magic Study feat can use a war spell like any other spell. A war spell uses a normal spell slot of its level for the purpose of spells known, spell preparation, and spellcasting. A war spell may be augmented by metamagic feats just like a normal spell. War spells do not appear on any class spell list for characters without the War Magic Study feat.

Casting a war spell requires more preparation than casting a normal spell. The caster must have surveyed the area to be targeted for at least 1 minute within the past 24 hours to gain familiarity with the lay of the land and the subtle influence of magic there. The use of spells such as *clairvoyance* and *scrying* are sufficient for this purpose. This requirement effectively limits the use of war spells to areas with which the caster is very familiar (such as the terrain around her castle) or to battlegrounds that she has had time to examine in advance (such as a spot where she plans

753 B.C.E.: The Founding of Rome
The city of Rome is founded by the legendary Romulus. Italian city-states in the region adopt a Greek-inspired culture from Greek colonies that are already in place on the Italian peninsula. In years to come, the Roman army models itself after that of the Greeks.

730 B.C.E.: The Assyrians' Siege Warfare
Assyria's seasoned warriors begin to expand its borders through effective use of siege warfare. Slingers and archers provide combined cover fire to protect siege teams while they build earthen ramps up to the walls of their enemies. Teams of crowbar-wielding soldiers perched on wooden siege towers and scaling ladders pull loose rocks directly from the walls. In conjunction with a powerful battering ram, which is protected from bowfire by leather hides, sappers destroy walls from their foundations.

Assyria is feared by nations and independent city-states alike. Under King Tiglath-Pileser, its forces conquer Damascus, Syria, Israel, and eventually the independent state of Babylon. Assyria controls its multicultural feudal empire by displacing native peoples and forcing them to settle in newly conquered regions. This forced mixing of cultures keeps organized resistance down, facilitates establishing and maintaining state institutions (both social and military), and provides easy labor for massive public works projects.

700 B.C.E.: The Resurgence of Greece
Phoenician traders reignite the cultural spark of the Greeks. The first large city-states emerge from stagnation through their strength as maritime traders. Athens and Sparta rise to preeminence among them.

Although the two city-states are uniform in both religion and language, they differ considerably in political ideology. Aggressively focused on its combat prowess, Sparta becomes a rising military power. Although Athens tends to avoid all forms of armed conflict, it becomes an immensely powerful trading community, eventually dominating the seas through the sheer force of its wealth. Athens extends its holdings throughout the Mediterranean and becomes a

WAR MAGIC STUDY

To cast spells with the war descriptor, a spellcaster must have the War Magic Study feat.

WAR MAGIC STUDY [GENERAL]

You have studied war magic and can perform the complex rituals necessary to utilize it.

Prerequisites: Great Fortitude, Iron Will, spellcaster level 3rd.

Benefit: You may acquire and cast spells with the war descriptor.

Normal: War magic spells do not appear on any class spell list for a character without this feat. Such a character cannot acquire or cast spells with the war descriptor but still can aid another person who is casting such a spell.

to lay an ambush or the site of an agreed-upon battle). Such spells cannot be used in casually viewed or unfamiliar terrain, such as dungeons or remote wilderness areas.

Casting Time

The casting time for a war spell is considerably longer than that for a normal spell—even the simplest war spell has a casting time of 1 minute. Drawing the power for such a spell takes time, and the process leaves the caster vulnerable to attack, just as casting any other spell does. Fortunately, war spells usually have long ranges, so the caster can normally position himself well away from the fighting—perhaps in a spot near an officer's tent that offers a clear line of sight to the target. Only the most brave, foolhardy, or well-protected spellcasters use war spells while standing in the midst of a battlefield; it is far too easy to lose the spell completely because of an enemy's blow. War spells cannot be quickened.

Range

Most war spells have ranges in the long category (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)—a fact that allows the caster to keep well out of harm's way. The few that have shorter ranges are designed to be used on friendly troops before the start of battle.

Aiming

Aiming a war spell works exactly the same as aiming a normal spell. A line of effect to the target is required. Given the long ranges often involved in casting, precise calculations of spell boundaries are very difficult. Therefore, hostile spells should be cast far from friendly troops if at all possible; otherwise friendly-fire casualties are likely. War spells use the same categories (effect, area, target, and so on) that normal spells do.

Saving Throw

A war spell might or might not offer a saving throw, depending upon its precise effect and the normal spell it resembles. For example, the *morning mists* spell allows no saving throw because the spell it resembles (*obscuring mist*) does not allow one. But *rolling fire*, like its counterpart *flaming sphere*, does allow a saving throw. Spell resistance is similarly dependant upon the effect and the conventional counterpart of the war spell.

Duration

Most war spell effects are short-lived, dissipating either before the end of a battle or shortly afterward. This quick decay results from the fact that war spells are inherently unstable, being essentially normal spells stretched to unreasonable limits.

Concentration

The unusual fragility of war spells is also reflected in the concentration necessary to cast them. The DC for any Concentration check made to continue casting or to maintain a war spell (in response to a successful attack, for example) is 10 higher than normal. Failure means the casting is ruined. Fortunately, the caster provokes an attack of opportunity only during the round when the casting starts, not each round that it continues. In addition, the caster's concentration can be aided by assistants (see Cooperative Casting, below).

Material Components

A war spell's expensive material components help the spellcaster harness, channel, and shape the magical energy needed for the effect. Because the components are so expensive, many casters cannot afford to use war spells very often. Those who can are usually in the employ of warlords, nobles, and other wealthy folk who are willing to absorb the costs.

Use in Items

The DM must carefully adjudicate the situation when a PC wishes to place a war spell into a magic item, since several of the balancing factors for these spells (required feats, surveying the area, and increased casting time) might no longer be relevant when the item is used. In such cases, the item's market price must be adjusted upward accordingly.

Cooperative Casting

Other spellcasters can aid a character casting a war spell, normally by repeating portions of the verbal or somatic components or by helping the caster manipulate the material components.

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colonial power, establishing settlements on the Ionian coast of Turkey in the east, on the coast of North Africa in the south, and on the Italian peninsula in the west.

700 B.C.E.: The Saddle

While the Greeks gain might in the Mediterranean, a new military development is underway in what will eventually become modern-day Siberia. The Scythians invent the saddle by placing a leather pad stuffed with deer fur atop a horse blanket. Leather straps to serve as saddle girth and stirrups soon follow.

The Scythian pad is a revolutionary advancement that increases a rider's steadiness (and therefore deadliness) in combat. It also improves a mount's performance by evenly distributing the rider's weight away from the animal's spine.

680 B.C.E.: The Militarization of Sparta

The Messenians stage an unsuccessful revolt against their Spartan masters. To contain the large Messenian population (which outnumbers the Spartans ten to one), the Spartans turn their nation into a military state. Members of the lowest class fill the main ranks of the army—a new tradition that leads to the conquest of other cities in the Greek peninsula.

Sparta's emphasis on military prowess pervades its entire culture. From the moment of birth, Spartan citizens belong wholly to the state. Official policy mandates education for females, and boys start training as soldiers from the age of seven. A soldier's daily training consists of a rigorous regimen designed to strengthen the will and hone the body into an unrelenting killing machine. Weakness in any form is shunned. As a result of their focused training, Spartan warriors become the best-trained fighters in the world. The Spartans develop the Greek phalanx formation (see The Greek Phalanx sidebar on page 23) and become its uncontested masters.

612 B.C.E.: The Collapse of Assyria

In 632, when Assyria is at the peak of its power, the aging King Ashurbanipal's twin sons wage war against each other, splitting the empire in half. Assyria swiftly begins to disintegrate.

The maximum number of assistants the caster may have is equal to the spell level of the war spell. Each assistant must meet the class and level requirements to cast the spell but need not have the War Magic Study feat.

Each round that an assistant chooses to cooperate in the casting, she must make a successful Concentration check (DC 10). Success grants the caster a +2 circumstance bonus on Concentration checks until the assistant's next turn. (Bonuses gained in this way from several assistants stack.) Normally, the caster keeps several assistants handy so that some can aid in spellcasting while the rest fend off attacks from enemy spellcasters.

Dispelling and Counterspelling

War spells can be dispelled and counterspelled just as easily as normal spells can. But although *dispel magic* or *greater dispelling* can dispel an ongoing war spell normally, only *dispel magic, greater dispelling, dispel war magic,* or the actual war spell can be used to counter a war spell—the normal spell on which the war spell is based is not sufficient. For example, a rival spellcaster could not counterspell *rolling fire* with a *flaming sphere* spell.

GUIDELINES FOR CREATING WAR SPELLS

In addition to the war spells presented here, spellcasters can develop additional war spells through spell research. When designing a war spell based on an existing spell in the *Player's Handbook*, six basic guidelines should be followed.

1. Increase the spell level by 1. War spells are more complex than their normal counterparts.

2. Add a material component if the spell doesn't already have one. The cost of the material component should be in the vicinity of spell level x minimum caster level x 100 gp. Occasionally a particular component might have a greater or lesser cost, depending upon factors such as the utility of the spell, whether its duration requires concentration, and the like. If the base spell already has a material component, multiply its value by ten and add it to the above value.

Also consider the equivalent nonmagical cost of the war spell's effect (for example, how much it costs to buy trail rations for one hundred people instead of using the *feed the many* spell). If the cost of the war spell is much greater than the cost of producing the effect in a mundane way, reduce the war spell cost to compensate. Otherwise, the war spell would rarely be used, which defeats the purpose of creating it in the first place.

3. Increase the casting time. Raise the casting time to 1 minute if the base spell's casting time is 1 full round or less, or to 10 minutes if the base spell's casting time is 1 minute or several rounds.

4. Increase the range. Increase the base spell's range to long if it is an attack spell or to medium if it is a beneficial spell.

5. Increase the area, effect, or number of targets. If the base spell produces a 20-foot-radius burst or spread, give the war spell either a 60-foot-radius burst or spread or a 100-square-foot area. If the base spell affects specific targets within that area (*circle of death*, for example), set the limit to twenty-five creatures per caster level.

6. Raise the number of creatures summoned by a summoning spell. If the base spell summons or creates an object or creature, the war spell summons twenty-five of those objects or creatures (all the same kind) per caster level.

KNOWN WAR SPELLS

The following war spells are common enough among spellcasters who specialize in this type of magic that their use is anticipated in any battle involving a practitioner of war spells. Other war spells certainly exist, but they are much rarer and probably have even more expensive components.

Dispel War Spell

Abjuration [War]
Level: Brd 4, Clr 4, Drd 5, Pal 4, Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Target or Area: One spellcaster, creature, or object; or 60-ft.-radius burst
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

As *dispel magic*, except as noted above. You also gain a +10 bonus on dispel checks made to dispel or counterspell war spells. Although *dispel war spell* can be used to counterspell normal spells, its long casting time makes it impractical or impossible to use it in this way except against a spell with a casting time of at least 1 minute.

Material Component: Sapphires, sunstones, and topazes worth a total of 1,500 gp.

Feed the Many

Conjuration (Creation) [War]
Level: Clr 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Effect: Food and water to sustain one

In 626, a Chaldean warlord leads Babylon and Uruk to independence, ushering in the Chaldean Dynasty of Babylon. Now too weak to retaliate, Assyria slides further into chaos.

In 612, a combined force consisting of the united Medean tribes, the Babylonians, and the Scythian barbarians obliterates Ninevah, the capital and last stronghold of the Assyrian empire. Its destruction is so complete that only wasteland is left.

586 B.C.E.: The Decline of Babylon
The king of the Chaldean Empire conquers Jerusalem, enslaves the Jewish people, and brings them back to Babylon. The empire usurps most of the former Assyrian territory and co-opts much of its military might. But the Chaldeans lack the strength of leadership to control the volatile region for a long period of time. For the next century, internal factions fight among themselves, weakening the empire until it finally succumbs to yet another outside invasion force.

538 B.C.E.: The Fall of Babylon
Cyrus the Great, ruler of the Persian Empire, conquers Babylon and frees the Jews. This victory puts an end to the Chaldean Empire and establishes Persia's control from the Indus River Valley in northern India to the eastern coast of the Aegean Sea. The Persian Empire claims the lands of Ionia (along the Turkish coast) as its own but deals fairly with the Greek colonies there.

Known for its fierce warriors, the Persian army consists mainly of cavalry archers and light infantry. The cavalry units are superbly effective on the open plains of Mesopotamia and the Indus River Valley, where their mobility coupled with the constant hail of arrows they deliver can quickly overcome most foes. Although the Persian cavalry is the largest in the world, its primary role remains to drive enemies into the hordes of Persian light infantry, whose numbers are also overwhelming compared with any other force in the world at this time.

hundred humans or thirty horses/level for 24 hours
Duration: 24 hours (see text of *create food and water* in the *Player's Handbook*)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

As *create food and water*, except as noted above.

Material Component: A silver, gold, or platinum plate worth 500 gp, engraved with holy symbols.

Cavalry Call

Conjuration (Summoning) [War]
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Effect: Up to twenty-five light horses or ponies per caster level
Duration: 2 hours/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

As *mount*, except as noted above. The summoned mounts must all be of the same kind (light horses or ponies).

Material Component: A miniature statue of a horse made of copper, silver, or gold, worth 1,000 gp.

Morning Mists

Conjuration (Creation) [War]
Level: Clr 2, Drd 2, Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Effect: 100-ft.-radius cloud 20 ft. high
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

As *obscuring mist*, except as noted. You may center the cloud anywhere within range. The cloud may be stationary or move away from you at a rate of 10 feet per round, but you must make this choice at the time of casting.

Material Component: Bloodstones worth a total of 100 gp.

Small Stronghold

Conjuration (Creation) [War]
Level: Clr 6, Drd 7, Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M, DF
Casting Time: 1 hour
Effect: One small stone keep (see text)
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You create a small stronghold made of magically conjured rock. This stronghold is identical to the "Cheap Keep" described in the *Stronghold Builder's Guidebook*.

The walls of the fortress cannot be placed so that any solid portion of one would occupy the same space as a creature. The stronghold may enclose a creature in one of its open spaces but not harm or trap it. For example, a squadron of soldiers could be arranged within the outer walls of the prospective keep in such a way that the walls would form around them, placing them in defense-ready positions inside.

When the spell ends, the keep collapses into dust. A *dispel magic* spell used successfully against the keep affects only the area encompassed by the *dispel magic* effect (a 30-ft.-radius burst).

Material Component: 10,000 gp worth of gems (agate, sapphire, and topaz) that have been crushed, mixed with clay, and formed into a crude model of the keep.

Summon Monstrous Horde

Conjuration (Summoning) [War]
Level: Brd 3, Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Effect: Up to twenty-five summoned creatures per caster level, no two of which can be more than 100 ft. apart
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

As *summon monster II*, except that you summon twenty-five of the kind of creature you have selected per caster level you possess. You cannot summon creatures from the *summon monster I* list.

Material Component: 1,500 gp worth of jet, powdered.

Summon the Pack and Herd

Conjuration (Summoning) [War]
Level: Drd 3, Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Effect: Up to twenty-five summoned creatures per caster level, no two of which can be more than 100 ft. apart
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

As *summon nature's ally II*, except that you summon twenty-five of the kind of creature you have selected per caster level you possess. You cannot summon creatures from the *summon nature's ally I* list.

Material Component: 1,500 gp worth of jet, powdered.

Battle Fury

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting, War]
Level: Brd 3, Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M

500 B.C.E.: The First Treatise on Warfare
The Zhou Dynasty is the nominal power in China, but in truth, China is a feudal state whose power structure consists of numerous warlords constantly vying for supremacy. Like the Mesopotamian and the Greek regions, China is a hotbed of constant conflict. From this pressure cooker emerges the first and possibly the greatest treatise on warfare ever written.

Sun Tzu, a strategist and general of profound military insight, produces *The Art of War*, a treatise espousing the use of minimum force to achieve maximum results. In many ways, the work seems ruthless in its approach to warfare. Western conventions such as "honor" and "fair play" are noticeably absent, while deception and covert tactics are openly recommended. In this respect, Sun Tzu's approach is remarkably modern. If one has completely run out of options and war is the only resort, he advises, then there is no such thing as "fair play."

The tenets put forward in this treatise are deeply rooted in Daoist philosophy. Sun Tzu maintains that the greatest general is the one who conquers without fighting. His wisdom continues to affect military thought throughout China and the rest of the world for the next two and a half millennia.

500 B.C.E.: The Crossbow
The military leaders of China's warring states make a profound contribution to military technology by permanently mounting a small bow on a stock with a simple latching mechanism. This crossbow, as it becomes known, can be used by nearly anyone—even a wounded soldier. Although its short range and slow firing rate present significant drawbacks on the battlefield, the crossbow's ease of use ensures its continued utility.

The crossbow eventually makes its way westward into Europe, there to be forgotten for hundreds of years. Eventually, it will be resurrected during the 10th century.

500 B.C.E.: Chainmail Armor
Chainmail, probably an invention of the Gauls, makes its debut around this time. Its use is

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Target: All living creatures within a 60-ft.-radius burst
Duration: Concentration
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *rage*, except as noted above. Normally this spell is used on allied troops, who forgo their saving throws to gain the benefits of the spell.

Material Component: A handful of tiny weapons carved out of lapis lazuli, worth a total of 2,500 gp.

Burned to Bare Rock

Evocation [Fire, War]
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Area: 60-ft.-radius spread
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *fireball*, except as noted above. *Burned to bare rock* can deal a maximum of 10d6 points of fire damage.

Material Component: Three flasks of alchemist's fire and powdered ruby worth at least 3,500 gp.

Force Missile Storm

Evocation [Force, War]
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Targets: Up to twenty-five creatures/level within a 60-ft.-radius
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *magic missile*, except as noted. You can fire only one missile at each target, regardless of your caster level.

Material Component: 600 gp worth of diamond dust.

Great Electric Bolt

Evocation [Electricity, War]
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Effect: Bolt of electricity 100 ft. long and either 10 ft. or 20 ft. wide
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *lightning bolt*, except as noted. You can create the bolt anywhere within range and in any orientation you desire; it does not have to extend from you.

Material Component: A handful of engraved copper and gold spheres worth at least 4,000 gp and a bit of animal fur.

Rolling Fire

Evocation [Fire, War]
Level: Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Effect: Wall of fire 3 ft. tall and 100 ft. wide
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Reflex negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a low, movable wall of fire. Any creature struck by the wall takes 2d6 points of fire damage (Reflex save negates). It ignites any flammable materials that it touches and illuminates its surroundings like a torch. It can be extinguished in 5-foot increments by any means that would put out a normal fire of that size.

You may move the wall up to 30 feet along the ground as a move-equivalent action, otherwise it remains in place. The motion must be in a straight line but can be either backward or forward. The wall can climb over barriers less than 4 feet tall, but it cannot cross water or other nonflammable liquids. The wall moves as a whole, even if parts of it have been extinguished.

Material Component: A comb made of copper and gold powdered with ruby dust, worth 1,500 gp as a whole.

Field of Blurs

Illusion (Glamer) [War]
Level: Brd 3, Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Targets: Up to 500 creatures
Duration: 1 minute
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

As *blur*, except as noted above.

Material Component: 1,500 gp worth of chrysoprase gems, powdered.

Friendsight

Illusion (Phantasm) [Mind-Affecting, War]
Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Area: Allied creatures within a 60-ft.-radius spread
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

All subjects of this spell perceive each other as surrounded by a glowing aura

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slow to spread, but its benefits are quickly apparent. The flexibility of its structure offers good protection but does not hinder movement the way other armors do.

In centuries to come, the city-state of Rome eventually adopts the limited use of chainmail shirts for its soldiers. Over time, chainmail becomes the armor of choice among common footsoldiers because of both its relatively low price and the amount of protection and versatility it offers.

499–448 B.C.E.: The Persian Wars
After an unsuccessful revolt by the Greek colonies in Persian-controlled Anatolia, word reaches the Persian ruler Darius I that the Greek city-states, led by the Athenians, had supported the revolt. Angered that the Greeks would interfere in the affairs of Ionia, Darius sends an expeditionary force of more than 25,000 soldiers to destroy the upstart Greeks. In 490 B.C.E., the Persian forces land near the city of Marathon, 26 miles from Athens. At the Battle of Marathon, a force of 10,000 Athenian hoplites defeats the much larger Persian army in a double pincer attack, and harries the retreating survivors back to their ships.

Ten years later, Darius's son Xerxes sends more than 500,000 soldiers and 1,000 ships to invade Greece again. Supported by a naval force that shadows its movements from the sea, the Persian army destroys everything in its path. Under the leadership of several Spartan generals of surpassing skill, the Greeks soundly defeat a portion of the Persian army at Salamis while bottling up the Persian navy in a narrow strait. The Greek navy, which is tiny in comparison to the enemy force, then destroys the Persian fleet with ramming and boarding tactics. This victory leaves the rest of the Persian army, still more than 200,000 strong, to be dealt with at Plataea.

Under the command of the brilliant Spartan warlord Pausanius, the Greeks utilize the terrain at Plataea to best advantage. Their hoplite phalanxes defeat the Persian army in one of the most savage battles in history. The Spartan core of the Greek army proves unstoppable, even by the numerically superior Persians.

of a color you specify upon casting. Distance, cover, and concealment do not negate the aura unless they prevent any possibility of sight. (That is, any subject capable of spotting another subject under the prevailing conditions can see the latter's aura.) Normally, this spell is used to prevent accidental attacks against allies in darkness, fog, battles with similarly dressed foes, and other confusing situations. This spell also gives each subject a +4 circumstance bonus on saving throws or opposed Charisma checks made to avoid any magical effect that would cause that subject to harm another target of the spell.

Friendsight is a phantasm, so the perceived auras are entirely in the mind of the subject. The recipients do not actually glow, although they radiate magic that can be detected with *detect magic* and similar effects.

Material Component: 100 gp worth of carbuncle and cat's-eye agate, crushed.

Animate Undead Legion

Necromancy [Evil, War]
Level: Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Area: Corpses within a 60-ft.-radius burst (see text)
Duration: Concentration (up to 1 minute/level)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You cause all bones or corpses within the spell's radius (including those buried underground to a depth of up to 10 feet) to rise as undead skeletons or zombies. Up to 25 Hit Dice worth of undead creatures per caster level can be created in this manner. These undead do not count toward your control limit for commanding undead through the rebuke undead ability or through spells such as *animate dead*. Normally this spell is cast on a graveyard, burial ground, or battle site to maximize the number of available bodies.

Any undead created by this spell that move out of its range are instantly destroyed. Likewise, when the spell ends, all undead created by it are instantly destroyed.

Material Component: An iron crown studded with black onyx gems worth 3,000 gp, plus one 10-gp onyx for every undead creature created by the spell.

Battle Fright

Necromancy [Fear, Mind-Affecting, War]
Level: Brd 4, Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Area: All living creatures within a 60-ft.-radius burst
Duration: Concentration
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *fear*, except as noted above. Creatures affected by this spell flee from you and your allies.

Material Component: A handful of tiny feet carved out of onyx, worth a total of 3,000 gp.

Plague Cloud

Necromancy [War]
Level: Clr 4, Drd 4, Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Effect: 100-ft.-radius cloud 20 ft. high
Duration: Concentration (up to 1 round/level) (see text)
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a sickly gray cloud that is heavier than air and laden with disease. At the time of casting, you must choose the disease the cloud carries from the following list: blinding sickness, cackle fever, filth fever, mindfire, red ache, the shakes, or slimy doom. Any creature within the cloud immediately contracts the disease on a failed save (no incubation period). The cloud can be moved or dispersed by normal or magical winds, but it has no innate ability to move. It disperses automatically when the spell expires, although anyone infected by the cloud's disease remains so and must recover normally.

Material Component: 3,000 gp worth of amber that has been crushed to a fine powder, mixed with dried otyugh blood, and sealed inside a small flask.

Enhance Armors

Transmutation [War]
Level: Clr 4
Components: V, S, M, DF
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Targets: Armor and shields in a 60-ft.-radius burst, up to twenty-five items/level
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

As *magic vestment*, except as noted. You choose which armor and shields to enhance. You may affect both the armor and the shield of a single creature, but these count as two items toward the spell's limit.

The Persian cavalry, which had previously mastered Mesopotamia with its mobile archers, proves utterly ineffective in the hilly countryside of Greece. The Persian infantry's inferior armor cannot withstand the assault of the Greek phalanxes, and its disorganized attacks are no match for the regimented discipline of the Spartans and Greeks.

These conflicts establish the Greek phalanx formation as a winning strategy. Never again will an eastern empire defeat a phalanx-based army. The Greek victory in the Persian War also cements the use of infantry as the primary field division in military operations for centuries.

Eventually, the Greeks liberate Ionia, then go on to spread their culture and military tactics throughout the Mediterranean and along the Anatolian coast.

429 B.C.E.: Chemical Warfare
The Spartans develop a concoction of sulfur and pitch, which they use to set fire to the wooden walls surrounding the cities of their enemies at Plataea. Soaking the timbers with this mixture causes the wood to burn at extremely high temperatures, and the defenders are unable to put out the flames.

424 B.C.E.: The Flamethrower
Capitalizing on the success of their sulfur-pitch concoction, the Spartans refine the technique further. At the Battle of Delium, they insert a cauldron filled with pitch, sulfur, and burning charcoal into a hollow tree trunk attached to a giant bellows. The contraption becomes, in effect, a giant flamethrower.

400 B.C.E.: Greek Artillery
The Greeks invent the gastrophetes, or "belly bow." In essence, the device is a large crossbow capable of launching a 30-pound stone almost 200 yards. Large and cumbersome, it is usable only for siege warfare. By 375 B.C.E., an improved design known as the katapelte, or "shield-piercer," arises. This device, later called a catapult, can hurl a stone with enough force to pierce the shield and the armor of a hoplite at more than 300 yards.

Material Component: A mixture of adamantine shards and crushed beryl, worth a total of 3,000 gp.

Enhance Weapons

Transmutation [War]
Level: Brd 2, Clr 2, Pal 2, Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S, M, DF
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Targets: Weapons in a 60-ft.-radius burst, up to twenty-five weapons/level
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

As *magic weapon*, except as noted above. You choose which weapons to enhance. You may affect more than one weapon carried by a single creature, but each weapon affected by the spell counts toward the spell's limit.

Material Component: Pieces of hematite worth a total of 1,000 gp.

Mire

Transmutation [War]
Level: Drd 6, Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M, DF
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Area: Surface rock in a 60-ft.-radius spread, 10 ft. high
Duration: Permanent (see text of *transmute rock to mud* in the *Player's Handbook*)
Saving Throw: See text of *transmute rock to mud* in the *Player's Handbook*
Spell Resistance: No

As *transmute rock to mud*, except as noted.

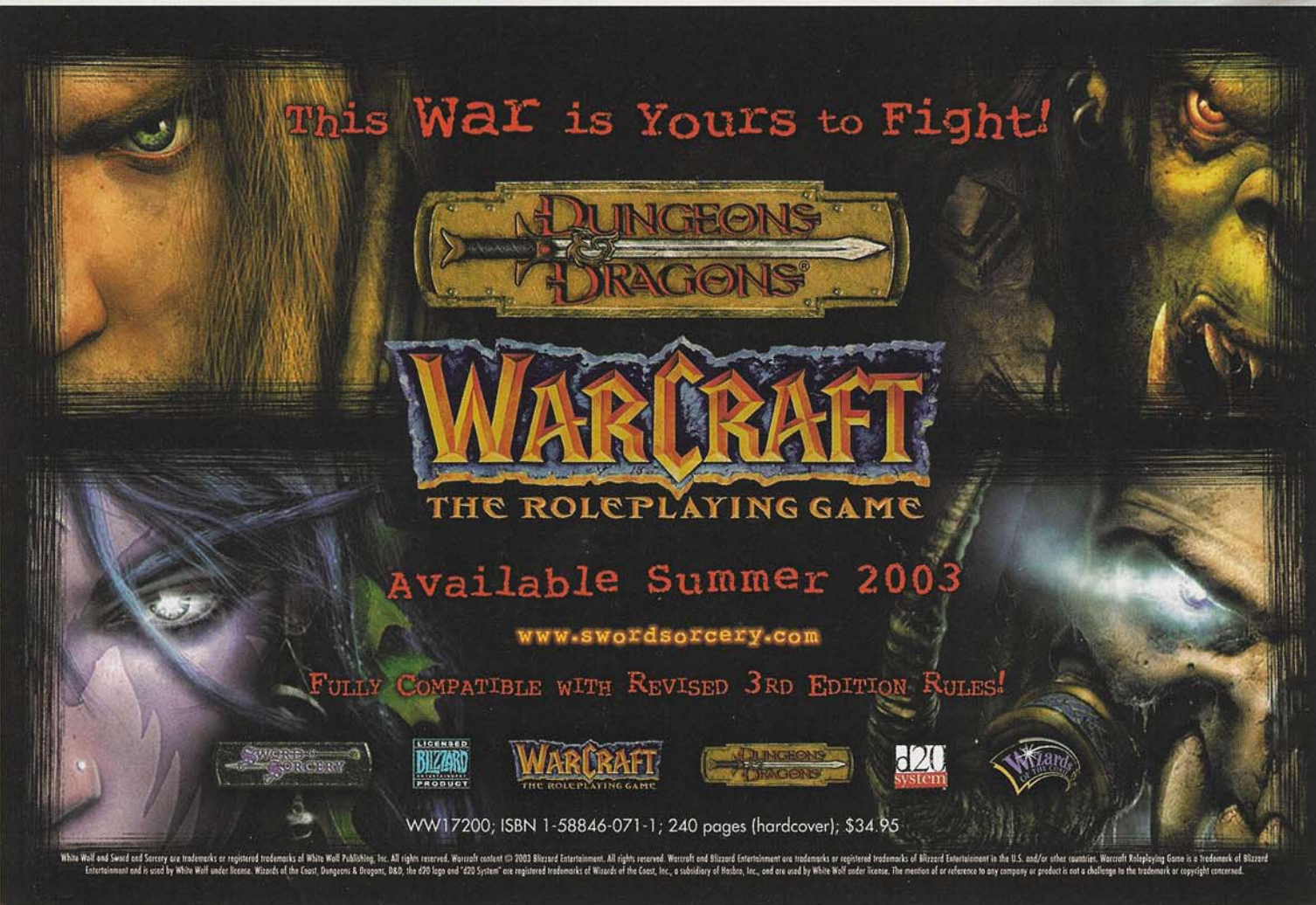
Material Component: Brown, gray, and black gems worth a total of 7,000 gp, all of which must be dissolved in acid.

Teleport Legion

Transmutation [Teleportation, War]
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Targets: Willing creatures within a 60 ft.-radius burst (see text)
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You instantly transport the target creatures to a location you designate. The destination must be on the same plane and either very familiar to you or a place you have studied carefully. You may transport up to ten Medium or smaller creatures per caster level, along with their gear. (A Large creature counts as two Medium creatures; a Huge or larger creature cannot be transported.) Mounts, familiars, and animal companions of the spell's targets are also considered willing creatures for the purpose of this spell. Familiars do not count toward the spell's limit, but mounts and animal companions do.

Material Component: Two linked metal rings (one silver, one gold) studded with jacinths, worth a total of 7,000 gp. D



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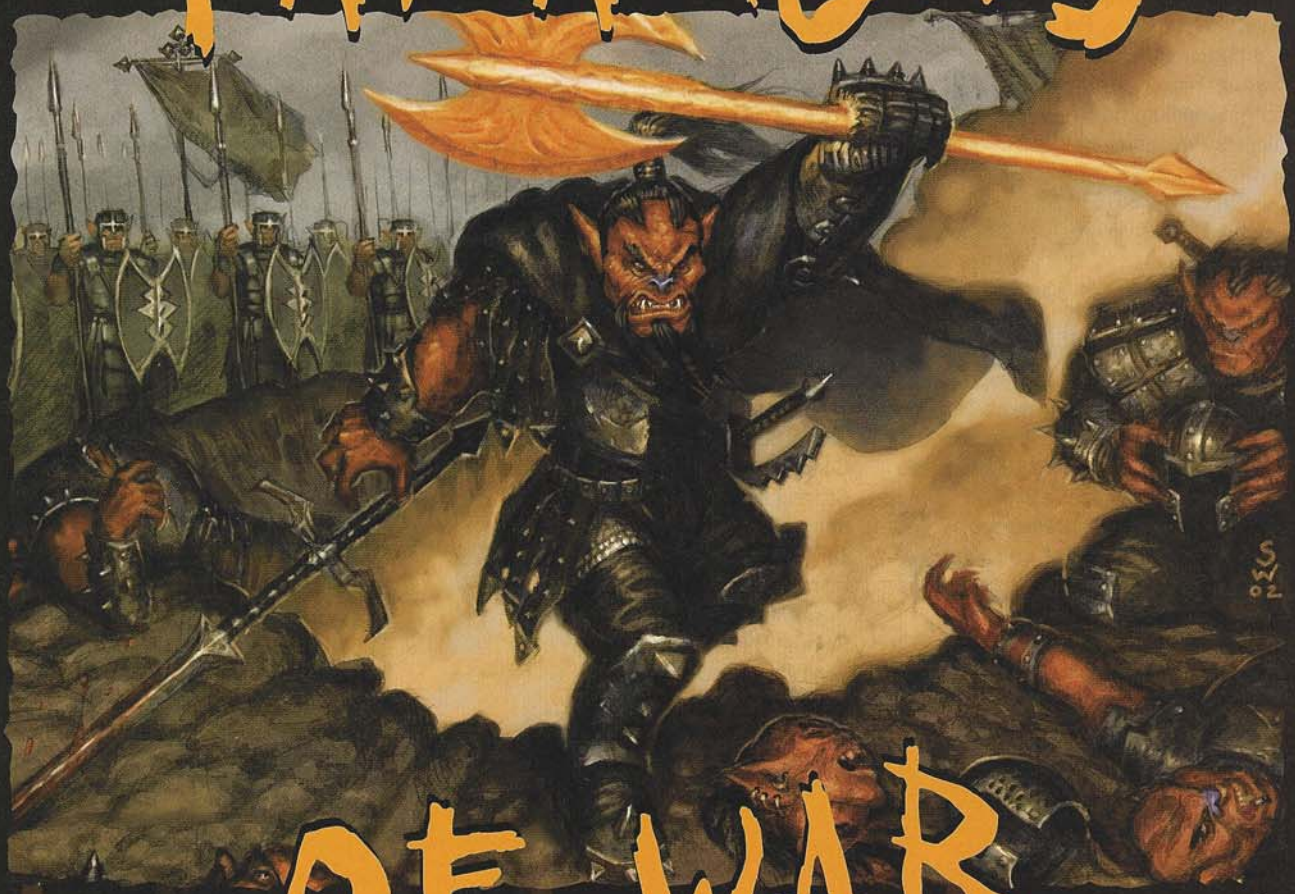
PARAGONS OF WAR



The Ecology of the Hobgoblin

by Terry Edwards · illustrated by Sam Wood

Goblins flee the world of light, cursed and wretched in their plight.
Dark dank caves the goblins live in, goblins pray to him who begat them:
Help us take back what's lost to day.
Maglubiyet guide us on the way,
Make a race whose power can end the reign of elves, and dwarves, and men.
Hobgoblin, hobgoblin!

Gather now by standards, by swords; come unite the scattered hordes!
By order hobgoblins will reclaim the world that goblins fled in shame.
Bring war, bring strife upon the land!
One tribe in victory will stand!
Guide to war the lesser kin and lend them strength the day to win.
Hobgoblin, hobgoblin!

Don the armor of fallen foes and pick the flesh clean from their bones,
Hobgoblin tribes grow strong through war; if they know peace they grow no more.
Shielded lands defended with might will never, never flee from light.
Vengeful conquest now begin. All goblinkind, come join your kin.
Hobgoblin, hobgoblin!

—Verses from hobgoblin creation myth, author unknown

There is a tendency among civilized peoples to classify all the evil humanoid races that populate untamed lands as lawless, savage, and disorganized barbarian hordes. But anyone laboring under such a misconception has obviously never been unfortunate enough to share territory with a hobgoblin tribe.

Hobgoblins represent the antithesis of the common goblinoid stereotype. Highly organized, well trained for battle, and strictly obedient to their military code, they function with a focused efficiency that army commanders of any race would envy. Driven by a simple ethos based on survival through continuous conquest, hobgoblin tribes have spread systematically throughout the inhabited regions of most campaign worlds. To state that these remarkable humanoids are merely survivalists, however, downplays the incredible depth of their culture.

Most players and even many DMs view the evil humanoid races as little more than substitute orcs, but in fact each fills a special niche within the campaign world. In particular, the unique psychology of hobgoblins on both the individual and the societal level serves to distance them from the rest of the humanoid pack. Hobgoblins are definitely not substitute orcs, and they are far more than just big goblins.

PHYSIOLOGY

Hobgoblins are born predators, and this heritage is apparent in their physical shape. A typical hobgoblin is lean and tall, averaging 6 1/2 feet in height and 200 pounds in weight. The muscles of his lithe frame are designed more for agility than strength, enabling him to move with an almost feline grace. Like a tiger, a hobgoblin excels at moving unheard, and his keen yellow eyes can see even in the darkest conditions.

Tattoos often accentuate a hobgoblin's crimson-orange skin, but they are far different from the ink pinprick designs that are sometimes sported by other races. Hobgoblin tattoos are deep scars branded into the flesh to demonstrate the bearer's tolerance for pain. For much the same reason, body piercing—the deeper and more painful the better—is a popular form of adornment among hobgoblins. But while his body might be run through with metal in several places, a hobgoblin always keeps his red (or in some cases, blue) nose unobstructed.

Coarse hair, usually gray or brown in color, covers the hobgoblin's thick hide. The hair on his head is generally worn long in several braids, which are adorned with bone jewelry crafted from the remains of slain foes. In like manner, any other adornments a hobgoblin wears are designed to call attention to either his battle prowess or his high tolerance for physical hardship.

PSYCHOLOGY

To ensure that each hobgoblin's mind remains continually focused on the survival of the tribe, the young are taught the life metaphor of the personal perimeter (see below) as soon as they are old enough to understand spoken words. This concept embodies the central philosophy behind hobgoblin behavior, and its principles influence all aspects of a hobgoblin's life. The personal perimeter means everything to a hobgoblin, and each is proud of the disciplined lifestyle required to maintain it.

The Personal Perimeter

Each hobgoblin learns early in life to establish a personal perimeter of defense. This perimeter represents not the chaotic creature's need for personal space, but a highly lawful creature's portion of the greater tribal perimeter. In the hobgoblin mindset, one hobgoblin controls his own immediate area, two control still more, and so forth. Thus, a whole tribe jointly controls a significant area that it claims for its own use.

The first step in learning to maintain a personal perimeter is rigid mental conditioning designed to expunge the potential weaknesses of debilitating emotion and extraneous thought. A mind free from distraction can give its full attention to maintaining a perimeter.

The methods used to achieve the required mental conditioning process are harsh, to say the least. Abuse, both physical and mental, is a common tool for developing the desired mental state. Combat training is the only emotional outlet allowed to hobgoblins, and learning to defend a space is the most integral part of maintaining a personal perimeter. Years of such extreme programming yield an unquestioningly loyal soldier who desires nothing more than to serve the tribe.

Always on the defensive, hobgoblins constantly evaluate their surroundings for tactical advantages. This tendency is most noticeable when they are outside the protective confines of their own tribal lands. No hobgoblin can be found overimbibing ale in a tavern while seated in front of a window or with his back to a crowd. More likely, he sits in a dark corner of the tavern that provides him with an unobstructed view of the room, nursing one drink throughout his stay.

Morality

The narrow focus of the hobgoblin mind leaves no room for moral questions. Mercy and compassion can only weaken the perimeter and cloud thinking.

371 B.C.E.: The Oblique Order Formation
Arguably the greatest general in the ancient world to date, Epaminondas leads the Theban army against the Spartans. But instead of lining up his phalanx and charging it headlong into the Spartan phalanx, as the Spartans themselves would do, Epaminondas masses his troops heavily to one side and staggers the rest of his line.

When the two phalanxes clash, the heavy side of the Theban phalanx massively overpowers its side of the Spartan phalanx. The weaker, staggered side of the Theban force rotates back slightly, just enough to defend. The broken phalanx of the Spartans is then flanked by the overpowering force of the Theban's heavy end. This arrangement allows the Thebans to assault the Spartan phalanx from its most vulnerable position—the side—while the rest of the Theban line fights defensively. Unable to protect themselves, the Spartans are slaughtered—not through superior training or weaponry but through superior tactics.

Philip II of Macedonia, trained by Epaminondas himself in all manner of warfare (including logistics, tactics, drilling, and the use of multiple field units in addition to infantry), further refines his mentor's so-called "oblique order." Generals throughout the ages will replicate the tactics of Epaminondas, and Philip's son Alexander will master them.

359 B.C.E.: The Complete Army
Philip II of Macedonia conquers Greece with the most tactically advanced army in the world. His force, predictably centered on the Greek phalanx, consists primarily of heavy infantry. Using tactics he learned from Epaminondas, Philip compensates for the inherent weakness of the phalanx by doubling its size and providing auxiliary cavalry, light infantry, skirmishers, and archers to protect its vulnerable flanks. He also extends the length of the lances used by the infantry to more than 12 feet.

Philip II's army is the first to use artillery routinely on the battlefield. His forces employ large dart-throwers capable of killing enemy soldiers at more than 200 yards. (The Greeks never

Individual freedom is meaningless and has no place in hobgoblin society, and respect for the freedom of others never enters a hobgoblin's thoughts.

The hobgoblin survival ethos drives every individual in the tribe and forms the basic rationale for the perimeter concept. Among hobgoblins, survival and security means constant preemptive domination of their surroundings. The land must be tamed to serve the tribe's needs, and enemies must be vanquished before they can become threats.

Other Cultures

Hobgoblins tend not to be social creatures. In fact, creatures of other races usually find them paranoid, insulting, and dismissive. At first meeting and for some time thereafter, hobgoblins usually exhibit all those traits, but only because they consider any creature not of their tribe to be a threat. Then too, a hobgoblin's rude behavior is often an expression of the paranoia that keeps him on his toes, as well as his disdain for the soft lifestyles of others.

Death and Dying

Although hobgoblins are born for combat, most do not actually intend to end their lives on the battlefield. Unlike many warmongering humanoids, hobgoblins do not view death in combat as honorable or glorious. Rather, it is viewed as evidence of failure to maintain a strong enough personal perimeter. Nevertheless, comrades felled in battle are respected and honored for their sacrifices.

A time to die is chosen by (or for) any individual who can no longer contribute anything to the tribe. The choice is a matter of pride, and the method invariably benefits the tribe. Many hobgoblins choose a form of ritual suicide designed to supply adepts with sacrifices.

SOCIETY

The primary concern of a hobgoblin tribe is survival. Survival means effective defense, and effective defense means eradication of all enemies and successful subjugation of all other creatures within the tribal perimeter. Hunting is a preemptive measure that serves both to remove threats from the tribe's ever-expanding area of control and to strengthen its individual members.

Like many humanoid races, hobgoblins maintain a parasitic relationship with the world around them, systematically stripping the land of its resources with no thought for conservation or renewal. Since few ecosystems can long tolerate such a disruptive presence, the tribe must move frequently. Agrarian civilizations are prime targets for hobgoblin raiding, since they boast ready supplies of food and populations unaccustomed to conflict. A hobgoblin incursion on such a territory can be likened to a locust swarm ravaging crops—a swift, overwhelming invasion that leaves nothing behind. Each successful conquest brings food, weapons, and materials into the tribe, which in turn provide the resources to fuel future campaigns.

Social Hierarchy

Unlike their chaotic goblinoid cousins, hobgoblins maintain a highly organized social order that operates with military efficiency. Hobgoblin society is loosely divided into three castes, each of which is further separated into two subcastes. The divisions are: military (command/warrior), religious (priest/instructor), and labor (crafter/worker). Caste assignment is based on both individual affinity for a given task and the tribe's current needs; gender has no bearing on placement. Once given, a caste assignment changes only when an individual is no longer capable of performing the required duties (such as a warrior who has taken a debilitating wound) or when the tribe's needs shift dramatically.

All castes are vital for the continued existence of the tribe, and as such their members receive equal treatment and honor. Although status within the tribe is most often linked with victory in battle, a heroic warrior always recognizes that victory would not be possible without the aid of the other castes. Failure to acknowledge the contributions of others within the tribe is a serious indiscretion. Repeated incidents of such neglect can result in the offender being formally ostracized from the tribe.

Military: The largest of a tribe's three social divisions, the military caste consists mostly of warriors and fighters. These individuals receive the best military training and are responsible for the protection of the tribe and the expansion of its perimeter. Ascension to command requires adaptability, cunning, and a keen mind—values often found among rogues. A tribe's leader is almost always a seasoned fighter/rogue from the military caste who is venerated as a hero by the tribe.

Labor: The crafters and workers of the labor caste are respected as the heart of a hobgoblin tribe. Composed primarily of experts and warriors, this caste makes up roughly one-third of the tribe's total adult population. Members of the labor caste are responsible for meeting the tribe's mundane needs. Most specialize in resource management, turning goods seized during conquest into food, arms and armor, housing, clothing, and other needed items. Members of the labor caste often receive military training as

widely adopt the use of artillery, but Philip's son Alexander does in years to come.)

Philip's army is the most flexible and versatile to date. It is capable of fighting in any terrain against any known force of his era. The adaptability of his armed forces allows Philip to conquer all the Greek city-states except Sparta.

350 B.C.E.: The Roman Legion

The Romans, now a rising power on the Italian peninsula, abandon the use of the Greek phalanx. The Italian countryside is ill-suited for the tightly packed formation, and it proves too cumbersome against the more mobile forces of the Gauls.

To replace it, the Romans develop a new formation that becomes known as the legion. Based on small groups of soldiers called maniples (Latin for "handfuls") that are arrayed in three lines, the Roman legion is far more maneuverable than the old Greek phalanx. It can adapt quickly to changes in the tide of battle by switching out its ranks so that fresh troops are always at the forefront. The legion evolves into an extremely fluid and versatile unit. Its long-term use builds the Roman army into the most disciplined and effective fighting force of the ancient world.

334 B.C.E.: The Triumph of Cavalry

In his first battle against the overwhelming forces of the Persians, Alexander the Great achieves the first victory in history to be decided by cavalry. The Persians, whose cavalry forces outnumber Alexander's two to one, are arrayed atop a steep riverbank. Alexander is forced to cross the river to engage. He opens with a feint, ordering a small band of cavalry uphill into the left wing of the Persian force. As Alexander's forces charge, taking horrendous damage from Persian arrows and javelins, the Persian left wing breaks formation and rides forward. Alexander then leads the rest of his right wing into the center of the disorganized Persian line. With speed and ferocity, his cavalry riders punch through and take the riverbank. They are joined by the Thessalian cavalry force of Alexander's left wing, which has outmaneuvered, outfought, and annihilated the numerically superior Persian right wing. Alexander's heavy

well, in case their help is needed to defend the tribe.

Religious: By far the smallest of the three castes, the religious caste is made up of truly outstanding individuals who were chosen for their minds. Most are trained as adepts, although sorcerers, clerics, and even assassins can be found within this caste. The religious caste serves as the tribe's connection to the divine and provides instruction for the youth, but in a very real sense, it is also the tribe's governing body. Although a member of the military caste typically functions as ruler, it is the religious caste that guides the tribe's fate. Tumultuous internal politics are rare in hobgoblin tribes, but if need be, the church can exercise the power of executive veto over a leader's decision.

Upbringing

Life within a hobgoblin tribe is strictly regimented. From the moment of birth, hobgoblin youths are molded, body and mind, in accordance with tribal ideals. Instructors from the religious caste oversee the youngsters' initial development and guide them in building their personal perimeters. Throughout the training process, the instructors assess their charges and choose future roles for them within the tribe. By the time the young hobgoblins reach adolescence, their instructor-based training is finished, and their personal perimeters have been firmly established. After a stint of mandatory military service, each takes up his or her preassigned role within the tribe.

Military Tactics

When a hobgoblin tribe moves into a new area, its first priority is to establish an entrenched base camp and defensive perimeter. Since raids against other humanoid settlements are the most efficient means of supplying the tribe with the resources necessary for survival, the location of the base camp is usually chosen to provide proximity to such a target. The base camp is often built around or within an existing structure, such as a dungeon, natural cavern, or building.

Once a secure camp has been established, expansion can begin. While stealthy scouts venture beyond the perimeter on reconnaissance missions, the hobgoblins in camp transform the landscape into a defensible battle plain. The earth is molded into trenches and ramparts, trees are felled for building material, and streams are rerouted to serve as moats. The outer perimeter of a completed base camp usually consists of a ring of outposts placed a few miles from the center. Depending on its proximity to trade routes and its relative importance, an outpost might be defended by anywhere from four to nine hobgoblin warriors and fighters.

The tribe's perimeter—outposts, moats, and fortifications—is a cooperative extension of each individual's personal perimeter, and it is maintained with the same degree of dedication. Once a hobgoblin tribe digs in, reaching the heart of its base camp requires a long and difficult fight.

Diet

Although hobgoblins are omnivorous, meat is their food of choice. Because of their mobile lifestyle, they have never mastered the techniques of agriculture, but most tribes maintain small herds of livestock. The bulk of a tribe's food, however, is obtained through raids and conquest. Hobgoblins consume the flesh of nearly every farm animal employed by humans and other civilized races, and large hobgoblin tribes and nations often seek to enslave or capture others who are capable of farming.

Reproduction

Hobgoblins reproduce through a selective breeding program that pairs the tribe's elite warriors, crafters, and priests in the hopes of producing superior offspring. Peers generally arrange such couplings during seasonal celebrations, religious holidays, or post-victory feasts. Marriage and monogamous relationships are unheard of in hobgoblin culture, since the emotion evoked by such close ties would only serve to weaken an individual's personal perimeter. Although parents maintain roles of authority in their children's lives, religious instructors raise the young hobgoblins in a communal environment, and their only true family is the tribe.

Industry

Hobgoblin conquests bring a steady supply of weapons and armor into the tribe. Since they rarely work from raw materials, hobgoblin crafters have become masters of repair and recycling. A typical suit of hobgoblin armor usually consists of several pieces of salvaged armor blended by hobgoblin experts into a work of functional art (usually the equivalent of studded leather). Any metal item that cannot be salvaged is melted down and forged anew. A hobgoblin always treats her equipment with respect, ceaselessly polishing and maintaining it, regardless of its origin. Unlike other goblinoids, hobgoblins never wear shoddy armor or wield rusty weapons.

While hobgoblin craftsmanship is at its peak in the reclaiming and manufacture of arms and armor, weaponsmithing is not the race's only creative outlet. The deep, resonant thunder of hobgoblin war

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infantry is now in position to engage the Persian forces. History repeats itself, and the Greek heavy infantry destroys the Persian infantry and light cavalry.

Through his feinting maneuver combined with the mobility and skill of his cavalry, Alexander earns a bloody victory. From there, he moves on to conquer the rest of the Persian Empire. In years to come, Alexander conquers lands beyond the borders of the known world, extending the Macedonian Empire from India in the east all the way to Europe in the west.

304 B.C.E.: Multifunction Siege Towers
The Greek engineer Epimachus creates the first multifunctional siege tower, which he calls helepolis, or "city-taker." At 140 feet tall and 150 tons, helepolis is the largest siege tower to date. Just rolling it forward on its eight massive wheels requires the combined might of 3,000 men. Iron scales protect its wooden frame from fire, and its front face has twenty artillery ports, each of which is fitted with wooden shutters covered in leather and stuffed with wool to protect the artillerists from attacks.

The tower sees its first use at the siege of Rhodes. After a prolonged battle, several of the iron scales are dislodged, leaving the tower vulnerable to attacks by fire. Rather than risk losing it, the Greeks pull back.

Despite its mediocre performance, the great tower profoundly changes the way siege warfare is waged. In later periods, the Romans and other cultures will improve upon the design of helepolis, adding hoisted battering rams and more powerful artillery, as well as boarding planks that allow infantry to storm walls.

221 B.C.E.: The Great Wall of China
The Great Wall is erected across northern China by the Qin Dynasty. This immense barrier eventually spans more than 4,000 miles and serves as the primary defense against marauding Huns from the north. Its effectiveness forces the Huns' migrations westward, into Asia and eastern Europe.

drums, called hrun'doums, is well known far beyond tribal lands, and hobgoblin crafters take great pride in building these instruments. They also craft many smaller percussion instruments, including steel drums, kintalas, and unique "talking" drums called p'doums. Hobgoblin drums are often enchanted for use on the battlefield, and many can produce rolling sonic attacks, doleful fear effects, and frenzied activity in their listeners. When a tribe actually needs to trade with another culture, drums and mercenary service are the typical offerings.

Race Relations

While most creatures sharing territory with hobgoblins can expect constant conflict with the tribe, a few cultures actually find hobgoblins to be good neighbors. Perhaps the greatest strength of the hobgoblin race is its ability to unite otherwise scattered goblinoid tribes into cohesive units. Weaker creatures such as goblins are easily conscripted into the fighting ranks of a hobgoblin tribe. Such creatures are typically used either to test enemy defenses or to overwhelm opponents with large numbers. Bugbears, ogres, and trolls that join hobgoblin tribes can occasionally claim leadership roles, but they usually end up serving as frontline muscle in perimeter outposts. Occasionally, hobgoblins can even form mutually beneficial relationships with human settlements. Many a warring king has discovered that a hobgoblin tribe can provide a ready supply of highly skilled mercenaries—for the right price.

While hobgoblins are open to guarded alliances with many other races, they do not tolerate proximity to rival hobgoblin tribes. Other humanoids in hobgoblin lands are seen as resources for the tribe, but another tribe of hobgoblins represents competition for the same resources and thus threatens the tribe's survival. Encounters between tribes always result in fierce battles and the destruction or routing of the weaker tribe. Only an exceptionally powerful hobgoblin leader can end such hostilities and unite multiple tribes.

KILLER CREATURE COMBOS

Hobgoblins recognize the value of allies in strengthening their perimeters, both tribal and personal. If the perceived benefit is sufficiently high, other intelligent creatures might even be accepted into the tribe to ensure the long-term success of joint ventures. The following combinations demonstrate the benefits of common hobgoblin alliances.

Hobgoblin and Worg

Worgs are frequently found within goblinoid societies, and hobgoblin tribes are no exception. In fact, many tribes even breed the foul beasts. Animal handlers within the labor caste often train worgs to serve as sentinels along the perimeter of a tribe's base camp, where their scent ability and racial skill bonuses can be invaluable assets to tribal security. Selective breeding programs can yield Large worgs suitable as mounts, and even exotic (fiendish) breeding is not unheard of in larger tribes. Because worgs are respected and well treated in hobgoblin society, they tend to be quite loyal to the tribes they serve.

A single 2nd-level hobgoblin fighter mounted on an 8-HD advanced worg is an EL 5 encounter.

Hobgoblin and Barghest

Although they are outsiders, barghests blend seamlessly into hobgoblin society, both mentally and physically. A barghest's change shape ability allows it to pose as a goblin or wolf when necessary, although it does not usually bother to disguise its true nature from the tribe. A barghest that joins a hobgoblin tribe typically assumes a leadership role within it and uses its position to push the tribe toward ever more evil behavior. As far as hobgoblins are concerned, the only drawback to allowing a barghest into the tribe is its tendency to eat more than its allotted ration.

When a barghest joins a warband, its spell-like abilities add a new dimension to traditional tactics. *Crushing despair* demoralizes foes, and *dimension door* allows for either a quick retreat or delivery of the barghest to a key battlefield location.

A barghest coupled with a gang of four 1st-level hobgoblin fighters is an EL 6 encounter.

REVISION ALERT

Crushing despair is a new spell available to bards and wizards. The revised barghest can use the spell once per day as a spell-like ability.

Hobgoblin and Bladeling

The infernal battlefield of Acheron is home to a warlike race of outsiders known as bladelings (see *Monster Manual II*). Although these beings dwell in virtual isolation on Ocanthus (Acheron's fourth layer), their warbands sometimes venture elsewhere within the planes, occasionally even joining the eternal war among the cubes. Bladeling mercenaries are welcome additions to Maglubiyet's armies on Avalas and are eagerly recruited.

The goblin deity also occasionally finds use for bladelings on the Material Plane, assigning them to serve as elite warriors within favored hobgoblin tribes.

216 B.C.E.: Double Envelopment Maneuver

The Carthaginian general Hannibal launches a campaign to destroy Rome. His army consists of nearly 45,000 troops, including 11,000 Numidian and Celtic cavalry riders supported by additional Spanish and Celt infantry. On his left wing are the Spanish/Celtic heavy cavalry forces under the leadership of his brother Hasdrubal; on his right wing are the Numidian light cavalry riders. Across from Hannibal, eight legions of Roman soldiers—80,000 troops and 6,000 cavalry—await in a deep Roman battle formation, hoping to crush Hannibal's center with their superior numbers.

Hannibal's heavy cavalry units begin the battle with a charge from the left into the Roman cavalry in front of them. The Roman cavalry force begins to crumble immediately under the onslaught of Hasdrubal's numerically superior and more skillful forces. The Roman legions charge headlong into Hannibal's infantry, which is forced to give ground to the superior numbers of the Romans.

As Hannibal's army is pushed back, its line becomes bowed, so that its outer sections flank the advancing Romans on either side. Rather than pursuing the fleeing Roman cavalry, Hasdrubal's riders swing left and come in behind the Roman legions. Nearly 60,000 Romans are slaughtered at Cannae, but Hannibal loses only 8,000 men.

The Battle of Cannae comes to be regarded as one of the most decisive victories and one of the bloodiest massacres in history. Hannibal's brilliant double envelopment maneuver remains in active use for thousands of years.

200 B.C.E.: The Roman Ballista

The Romans design a new weapon called the ballista. Essentially a massive crossbow mounted on a rolling frame, it launches large stone balls or deadly, iron-tipped spears that are capable of impaling multiple targets. The design is highly adaptable, and many types of ballistae quickly appear, varying greatly in size and purpose. Some fling missiles at enemy soldiers, while

A bladeling's damage reduction, resistances, immunities, and razor storm ability make it an excellent melee fighter and an ideal addition to a warband. While the bladeling takes on opponents in melee, its hobgoblin companions are free to focus on ranged support. Then, after the bladeling has used its razor storm ability, the hobgoblins can join the melee and finish off the enemy.

Two bladelings with four 1st-level hobgoblin warriors constitute an EL 4 encounter.

Hobgoblin and Formian

When the expansionist formians encounter hobgoblins in search of new territory, the typical result is an explosive war that ends only when one side or the other has been utterly destroyed. Nevertheless, examination of each race's social structure reveals many parallels that could be exploited in joint ventures.

Although formians would never accept the rule of a hobgoblin leader, the opposite is possible. A hobgoblin tribe in dire need might allow its members to be conscripted as workers or warriors under the command of formian taskmasters. The taskmasters' telepathic abilities allow them to issue precise yet silent orders, which would prove invaluable to a warband engaged in a covert assault on a nearby area.

A single formian taskmaster with three 2nd-level hobgoblin fighters is an EL 8 encounter.

TACTICS

Because of the hobgoblins' military bent, tactics are an important part of any encounter with them. The following sections examine the tactics that hobgoblins commonly use against their enemies and provide tips for PCs to use in overcoming a hobgoblin threat.

Hobgoblins vs. PCs

The tactics described below are typical for a group of hobgoblins facing a PC party. DMs can adapt these as they see fit or use them as springboards to develop customized tactics for a particular tribe.

Tactical Terrain Advantage: Hobgoblins are always aware of their surroundings and tend to take advantage of terrain benefits, especially high ground, cover, and concealment. Cover and concealment are most useful for ranged attacks, and the +1 bonus on attack rolls granted by higher ground provides a significant asset during melee. If combat occurs on the hobgoblins' home turf, terrain enhancements designed to convey such advantages should already be in place.

Ready the Reserves: While the main tribal force engages the PCs in melee, one or two hobgoblins armed with bows remain in reserve. Their main purpose is to use readied actions to disrupt spellcasters with ranged attacks. The reserves might lose an action or two in this way, but the potential benefit is worth the trade, since a single successfully cast spell can leave a warband asleep, dazed, or just plain dead. Reserves can also help to defend allies during a strategic retreat or hold PCs at bay while their comrades fall back and set up a trap to catch pursuers.

Adept and Overcome: Adepts and other spellcasters from the religious caste often travel with hobgoblin warbands. Although adepts lack the focus and power of wizards and have only a handful of spells to choose from, their effectiveness should not be underestimated. The adept has access to classic arcane spell effects such as *burning hands, invisibility,* and even *lightning bolt* at higher levels. On the divine side, adepts can cast *cure* spells and enhance their comrades' effectiveness on the field via *bless, bull's strength,* and assorted protection effects. Furthermore, adepts can wear armor without fear of spell failure. Even though they are not proficient with its use, armor allows them to blend in with the fighters and gain a substantial degree of protection.

PCs vs. Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins are militant creatures geared toward combat. When your party encounters them, you can expect tactics to play a key role in the outcome of the battle. Below are some tips that might help to turn the tide in your party's favor.

Level the Field: A party balanced with a mix of character classes probably can't trade blow for blow with a hobgoblin gang composed primarily of fighters. Thus, it pays to upgrade your party's combat capability ahead of time if you can. Cast spells such as *bless, bane, aid,* and *protection from evil* to improve the attacks, Armor Class, and other combat capabilities of your allies. *Shield* or *protection from arrows* should also be cast early to foil enemy archers.

Concealment can give you a significant edge. While it won't help you hit, it does reduce the effectiveness of hobgoblin archers. Smokesticks and spells such as *blur, darkness, fog cloud,* and *obscuring mist* are all good sources of concealment.

Hit the Dirt: If hobgoblin archers are giving you a hard time, try kneeling or even lying prone. Such positioning imposes a -2 or -4 penalty, respectively, on ranged attacks against you. While this tactic significantly reduces your melee effectiveness and makes your ranged

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others are designed for siege warfare. Like the artillery of modern armies, ballistae are fired from the rear, over the heads of allied soldiers.

104 B.C.E.: The Professional Soldier
Amid great controversy in the Roman Senate, Marius, Consul of Rome, opens up recruitment to commoners. For the first time, a commoner can receive training and gain an actual profession by taking up arms with the standing army. In this manner, he can earn land and a pension for his family. Under this new program, commoners swell the ranks of the legions. With mandatory training for all, the army becomes a streamlined, uniform order of disciplined soldiers.

53 B.C.E.: Mobile Cavalry Defeats Infantry
Seeking to push the Roman border into Armenia, Marcus Crassus leads more than 30,000 soldiers into Selucia. There they encounter the main force of native Parthians, who are arguably the best cavalry soldiers of their era. The Parthians surround and harass the Romans, forcing them into a defensive square. Relying on their better bows and vastly superior mobility to keep away from the Roman infantry, the Parthians force the invaders to retreat over the course of three days, leaving their wounded behind. The Parthians butcher the stragglers, including Crassus's own son, whose head they place on a pike to taunt the Roman general.

Once the Romans are down to a few thousand men, the Parthians offer to parley with Crassus. In no position to retreat further and unable to engage the Parthians because of their deadly harassing tactics, Crassus agrees. But when he and his command staff enter the enemy command tent, the Parthians slaughter them and then rout the now-leaderless Romans. More than 20,000 Roman soldiers die, and 10,000 more are captured.

300 C.E.: The Catapult
The Romans invent a torsion-based siege device to replace the ballista. Named the onager, or "wild ass," for its kicking recoil, the contraption resembles a classic Hollywood-style catapult

Language: Hobgoblins speak the guttural goblin tongue, which uses the dwarven script, and most also speak Common.

Names: The religious caste names each hobgoblin at birth. The suffix 'ken is added to the given name of a female, and the suffix 'kon to that of a male. This construction is then followed by the mother's and/or father's name, the tribe's name, and the individual's position (for example, a male hobgoblin warrior might be named Maelegym Uluk'kon of Aeltan's Shield, Guard of the First Perimeter). In human lands, a hobgoblin separated from his tribe might use a name that contains references to his past but still identifies himself based on his new role and homeland (for example, Hemelion of Alsheem Merchant Praikos, Caravan Guard).

Adventurers: Finding little acceptance outside their own society, outcast hobgoblins are often attracted to the adventuring life, where they can put their militaristic skills to good use.

Hobgoblin Traits

Hobgoblin characters have the following racial traits.

- **+2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution:** Hobgoblins are naturally agile, and they are capable of enduring great physical hardship.
- **Medium:** As a Medium creature, a hobgoblin has no special bonuses or penalties due to his size.
- **Base Land Speed:** A hobgoblin's base land speed is 30 feet.
- **Darkvision:** A hobgoblin can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and a hobgoblin can function just fine with no light at all.
- **Racial Skill Bonus:** A hobgoblin has a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

combined assault, featuring rapid fire from mounted archers combined with shock attacks from mounted lancers. The military wisdom of the *Strategicon* rivals that of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* from a millennium earlier, and numerous parallels exist between the two works.

600 C.E.: The Iron Stirrup
Greatly impressed by the precision and military prowess that the Huns to the north display on horseback, the Chinese develop the iron stirrup. This device gives cavalry riders unprecedented control and stability, which in turn allows them to fight effectively from horseback with all manner of weapons.

Over the course of several centuries, the stirrup migrates slowly to Europe, where it helps to establish the dominance of cavalry over infantry on the battlefield during the Middle Ages. Its use by mounted knights also serves to reinforce the feudal system. Many military scholars consider the stirrup to be the most significant military invention of the period.

919 C.E.: The Military Use of Gunpowder
The Song Dynasty in China puts gunpowder (invented in 3 C.E.) into military use against the invading barbarians from the Asian steppes. Chinese soldiers drive back the invaders by shooting gunpowder from bamboo-tube flamethrowers. Although it receives little notice at the time, this use of gunpowder sets a precedent that will eventually change the face of warfare.

1,000 C.E.: The Crossbow in Europe
Invented almost 1,500 years before by the Chinese, the crossbow now comes into regular use in medieval armies. Operating a crossbow requires considerably less skill than firing a longbow does, and a crossbow bolt retains enough penetrating power to kill a warrior even after passing through both his shield and the mail armor behind it. And unlike the bow, the crossbow is easy to mass-produce. The wholesale adoption of this weapon by European military forces means that, for the first time, relatively

• **Automatic Languages:** Common, Goblin. Bonus Languages: Draconic, Dwarven, Infernal, Giant, Orc.

• **Level Adjustment:** +1. A hobgoblin has an effective character level (ECL) of 1 + his class levels, so a 6th-level hobgoblin fighter would have an ECL of 7.

• **Favored Class:** Fighter. A multiclass hobgoblin's fighter class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty.

NPC Hobgoblins

NPC hobgoblins are often attracted to classes that focus on evil activities, particularly rogue, assassin, and blackguard.

Rogue: Within the military caste of hobgoblin society, intelligence separates the commanders from the common warriors. Commanders are experts at utilizing their surroundings and typically incorporate stealth into their defense of their personal perimeters. With their impressive array of skills and abilities, hobgoblin commanders are extremely adaptable and very dangerous.

A hobgoblin's naturally high Dexterity score coupled with his racial bonus on Move Silently checks makes him an excellent candidate for the rogue class. Because of the militaristic social structure of a hobgoblin tribe, however, the typical hobgoblin picks up some levels as a fighter before switching to rogue. The leader of a hobgoblin warband is usually a fighter/rogue.

Assassin: Hobgoblin tribes often need special operatives to manage their dealings with difficult enemies or allies. Such agents must be able to function as diplomats or simply remove inconvenient enemies, as the need presents itself. Thus, they are often trained as assassins. Candidates for assassin training are selected at an early age by the religious caste, which directly oversees even the portions of their education supplied by mentors from other castes.

All hobgoblin assassins are operatives of the church, and the leaders of the religious caste take great pains to ensure their loyalty. Rarely does an assassin ever look beyond her station or question the motives and orders of her religious superiors. Any hobgoblin assassin encountered outside a tribe is likely to be on a mission of "diplomacy" and is always alone.

Blackguard: The presence of a barghest leader within a tribe often leads to the rise of a champion of evil within the hobgoblin ranks. When the barghest relinquishes control of the tribe, through either death or choice, its evil disciple is ready to take over the reins of leadership. The new leader's agenda is frequently even more horrific than that of the barghest.

A blackguard within a hobgoblin tribe is always its leader, unless a barghest is also present. In the latter case, the blackguard might function as the tribe's high priest instead. Charismatic hobgoblin blackguards are often capable of uniting rival hobgoblin tribes and drawing huge armies to their causes.

Blackguard leaders usually command from the front line, inspiring troops with their heroic acts of evil. The momentum of their dark armies builds with each conquest, until only the death of the blackguard himself can stop them.

LAIR OF THE HOBGOBLIN

The map presents a sample hobgoblin lair. This outpost could function as the main launching point for a planned conquest of a nearby human village or serve as the base camp of a small tribe.

1. The Site

The hobgoblins of the Phalanx tribe have converted an abandoned flour mill into a watchtower and fortified the surrounding area. The camp is manned by a standard hobgoblin garrison consisting of twelve 1st-level warriors, eight 1st-level fighters, one 3rd-level fighter sergeant, and one 6th-level fighter/rogue leader (Kehelahna Pegn'Ken of Phalanx, Perimeter Commander).

2. Rock Wall and Ramparts

The hobgoblins have built earthen ramparts averaging 10 to 15 feet in height (Climb DC 15) around the site. Along the tops of the ramparts are several 4-foot-high walls that can provide cover for Medium creatures. These walls can also be collapsed onto anyone attempting to climb the rampart as a standard action, dealing 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage to each climber (DC 15 Reflex save for half).

During any attack from the outside, the sergeant and nine of the warriors defend the ramparts.

3. Trapped Rock Wall (EL 2)

Two 4-foot-tall rock walls stand roughly 30 feet from the first earthen ramparts. Just behind each wall is a spiked pit trap covered with canvas and hidden under bracken and small stones. If anyone falls into the pit, the rock wall collapses into the hole as well, dealing additional damage. These two structures are designed to trap invaders who try to take cover.

Rock Wall Pit Trap: CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 10 ft. deep (1d6, fall and 1d6, falling stones); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

4. Loading Deck

A 7-foot-tall wooden wall set with iron spikes now stands in front of what was

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poorly trained soldiers can produce ranged fire with excellent killing power.

The widespread use of the crossbow spurs the development of plate armor, but the crossbow evolves right alongside it, maintaining such a level of lethality that the Pope eventually and unsuccessfully bans its use.

1,066 C.E.: Cavalry at the Battle of Hastings

The Battle of Hastings marks the beginning of the cavalry's ascendance on the battlefields of Europe. The defender is Harold Godwinson, backed by his fierce Huscarles—an elite cadre of Anglo-Saxon infantry clad in heavy chainmail, bearing large shields, and wielding axes. A mounted infantry corps of Huscarles is also present, but its soldiers are not trained to work cohesively and are not, strictly speaking, a cavalry force. The attacker is William the Conqueror, who fields a Norman army that includes infantry, cavalry, archers, and spearmen. Although more diverse than Harold's force in both composition and discipline, William's army is inferior in actual prowess.

After a full day, the battle is a stalemate. The phalanx shield wall of the Huscarles remains impenetrable until a feint from William's left cavalry wing tempts Harold's line into breaking. The charging Norman cavalry riders turn away at the last moment as if to flee, and the main body of Harold's army gives chase without orders. The remaining Norman cavalry units then flood into the gap, and Harold is slain. A few bloody minutes later, his army is in full rout.

William's victory in this battle establishes Norman rule in England. Within a century, the Norman Empire is the most powerful nation in Europe.

On the field of battle, cavalry rises to prominence over infantry and becomes the army's primary assault arm. While the infantry remains the backbone of the classical army, the cavalry maintains its place as the army's most tactically powerful unit for centuries to come.

1,100 C.E.: The Trebuchet

The Europeans improve upon an earlier Chinese device that allowed a single soldier to

once the loading deck of the flour mill. Six hobgoblin defenders, each armed with a longspear or halberd, stand on a raised platform affixed to the inside of the wall, ready to defend it. Twenty extra weapons of each type lie on the platform beside them, ready for use. A barred gate in the center of the wall gives access to the outpost.

Each hobgoblin attacking from the wall gains a +1 bonus on melee attack rolls because of high ground. During an attack on the camp, the hobgoblin leader joins the six warriors stationed here.

Wooden Wall: 6 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 60; Break DC 20; Climb DC 21.

5. Barracks

The area that once served as the storage and milling rooms of the flour mill now functions as quarters for the hobgoblin garrison. This portion of the building is set into the hillside and accessible only through the front door or the tower above. Arrow slits have been added to the walls and doors, granting improved cover to the five archers that can man each of the walls. Food and water supplies for the outpost are stored in this area, along with several longbows and a large reserve of arrows.

6. Watchtower

The windmill's blades have been removed to allow construction of an archer loft on top of the mill. This loft can be reached either by ladder from the barracks or through a trapdoor in the ceiling that is accessible via a ladder at the back of the mill. The loft area can provide cover for up to five hobgoblin archers.

During an outside attack, two hobgoblin elite fighters and three hobgoblin warriors man the loft.

7. Tent Sites

Atop the hill are two large holes covered with tents. These makeshift structures are designed to house the outpost's excess population until raiding allows comfortable expansion. The tents are not visible from lower elevations.

Kehelahna Pegn'Ken of Phalanx, Perimeter Commander: Female hobgoblin Fighter 4/Rogue 2; CR 6; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 4d10+16 plus 2d6+8; hp 53; Init +3; Spd 20 ft. in hobgoblin armor; base 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +9 melee (1d8+5/19-20, *+2 defending longsword*); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+5/19-20, *+2 defending longsword*) or +6 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword) or +8 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, trapfinding; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Escape Artist +5, Handle Animal +7, Hide +5, Jump +3, Move Silently +8, Ride +12; Dodge, Expertise, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Kehelahna takes no damage on a successful saving throw.

Trapfinding (Ex): Kehelahna can use Search to find any trap with a Search DC higher than 20. She can also use Disable Device to disarm magic traps and can bypass a trap without disabling it by beating its Disable Device DC by 10 or more.

Possessions: hobgoblin armor (scale mail), small spiked steel shield, *+2 defending longsword,* short sword, longbow, quiver, 20 arrows, *potion of cure moderate wounds,* 2 tanglefoot bags.

Hobgoblin Sergeant: Male hobgoblin Ftr 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d10+9; hp 25; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +8 ranged (1d8+1/x3, composite longbow [+1 Str bonus]); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Move Silently +7, Ride +10; Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (composite longbow).

Possessions: hobgoblin armor (studded leather), scimitar, composite longbow (+1 Str bonus), quiver, 20 arrows, 2 *sleep arrows, potion of cat's grace,* tanglefoot bag.

Hobgoblin Elite (8): Male and female hobgoblin Ftr 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d10+2; hp 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +2 melee (1d8/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8/19-20, longsword) or +1 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger), or +4 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Move Silently +4, Ride +6; Dodge, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: hobgoblin armor (studded leather), small steel shield, masterwork longsword, dagger, masterwork longbow, quiver, 20 arrows.

Hobgoblin Warriors (12): Male and female hobgoblin War 1; see the *Monster Manual.* D

launch small stones great distances. The European version of this trebuchet becomes the ultimate siege weapon, a device of deadly power that can propel a 300-pound boulder more than 300 yards.

Edward "Longshanks" I of England is credited with the creation of a monstrous trebuchet known as the Warwolf. This device, which can blast a hole through a 5-foot-thick wall with a single impact, becomes known in later eras as "the atomic bomb of the medieval age."

The advent of the trebuchet spurs the development of improved fortifications. Many stories of the new weapon's capabilities filter home from the Crusades.

1,196 C.E.: Gunpowder Weaponry

The Chinese develop additional military uses for gunpowder. The first of these is a new weapon—a multichambered bamboo tube that is filled with gunpowder and shrapnel and affixed to an arrow. In mid-flight, the arrow becomes propelled by repeated gunpowder blasts (the first staged rockets). Eventually the missile explodes, sending deadly shrapnel into enemy ranks.

Shortly thereafter, the Chinese also learn to launch ignited casks of gunpowder at their enemies with siege engines.

1,200 C.E.: Plate Armor

The proliferation of deadly piercing weapons spurs the creation of armor that can better resist penetration. The addition of iron plates to common chain armor improves its protective qualities without significantly reducing mobility.

Initially, the chain hauberk of an elite soldier is covered with a gambeson, or quilted coat, that has iron plates sewn into it. The eventual addition of armored sleeves, leggings, and joints produces a full suit of plate armor, which slowly evolves into the famous full plate armor used centuries later.

Because of its weight and expense, few footsoldiers use full plate armor. Such protection becomes the province of mounted warriors, whose steeds can bear the brunt of the armor's weight.

NEW MARTIAL ARTS STYLES

by Brian Mintner · illustrated by Jeff Laubenstein

The unarmed fighting styles collectively referred to as martial arts are the heart and soul of any *Oriental Adventures* campaign. No adventure in such a setting would be complete without stern-faced monks shouting incomprehensible battle cries as they fly through the air, or an ancient master, armed with nothing more than his clenched fists, squaring off to defend a bridge against ill-mannered ruffians. And what about the dreaded ninja who drops from the heights to silence the samurai guard's warning cry with a sudden flutter of black-gloved hands? All these images are part and parcel of the setting. Without them, its unique flavor would be gone.

The martial arts rules presented in *Oriental Adventures* can also be used with more conventional campaigns, particularly where monk and fighter characters are concerned. Using the guidelines presented below, you can create new martial arts styles unique to your world. Not only do such customized styles lend an exotic air to monks and other characters who fight unarmed, but they can also improve the depth and history of your entire world. It is from details such as these that the most memorable campaigns are built.

CREATING A UNIQUE MARTIAL ARTS STYLE

When a new martial arts style is created for a campaign, the DM must always be part of the process. If the style is intended for PC use, players should also participate in the development, to ensure that the style is one characters will find attractive.

In such a joint development process, the DM should get together outside the game with any players whose characters might be interested in studying the style. Players can suggest rough concepts based on the kinds of martial artists they would like to play. For example, one player might want an aggressive, kick-based style, while another prefers a fast-paced, staff-fighting style that stresses defensive maneuvers. Then the DM can flesh out the particulars using the guidelines that follow, ensure that the style is balanced, and add some background based on where the style and its practitioners fit into the overall campaign world.

Checklist for Developing a Martial Arts Style

A martial arts style typically focuses on certain feats and skills that harmonize with some overall theme. Each also features one mastery effect, although some have two. To create new styles for your own campaign, follow the steps below.

1,215 C.E.: The Mongol Empire

Temujin, later known as Chingiz Khan (or Genghis Khan), conquers China and forges the Mongol Empire. His military power depends on his extremely well-disciplined cavalry, which includes units ranging in size from 10-rider squads to the massive, 10,000-soldier tuman.

The legendary riding endurance of the Mongol warriors is due partly to their well-crafted saddles, which are fashioned for the comfort of horse as well as rider. Each cavalryman maintains several horses, riding one and using the spares to carry foodstuffs and equipment. When provisions run low, a soldier can make a small cut in a horse's vein and drink a small amount of its blood for nourishment.

The Mongols rely on mobility and firepower to overcome their foes. Most infantry-based military forces of this era cannot keep up with the Mongol hordes, which can force march more than 60 miles a day across rugged terrain with little difficulty. A favorite Mongol tactic is to let large enemy forces tire themselves out in the chase, then double back, encircle the pursuers, and rain bowfire down upon them.

The foundation of Mongol weaponry is a native composite bow of superb construction. Deadly at more than 350 yards, the Mongol composite bow is far superior to the English longbow. A typical Mongol warrior also carries a 12-foot lance, a battleaxe, and a lasso.

By 1,223 C.E., Genghis Khan conquers all of central Asia and moves on to eastern Europe. Although his forces are outnumbered (in some cases as much as four to one), they are superbly trained and organized. Their hit-and-run tactics prove more than a match for the armies of Russia and other eastern European nations.

In 1,227 C.E., Genghis Khan dies while campaigning in central Asia. His successors carve out the largest land empire in history. At its zenith, the Mongol Empire stretches from central Europe to China and from Russia to Malaysia. Its period of supremacy is brief—just short of two centuries—but its vast reach helps to spread many cultural and military achievements both east and west.

1. Select Feats

Although a martial arts style is more than just a collection of feats, a judicious selection of complementary feats often forms its foundation. Nearly any combat-oriented feat can be incorporated into a new style, and you can choose from a wide selection, including original feats you have invented for your campaign.

If you haven't already done so, decide what sort of method your new martial arts style teaches. Once you have a basic idea of what the style is like, put together a comprehensive list of feats that harmonize well with it. Don't just select cool feats at random; make sure that something about each feat actually reflects the basic philosophy behind the style, at least in a small way. Not every feat has to tie in with the style's primary focus; in fact, throwing in a few feats that reflect some secondary aspect of the style can make it more interesting and provide a degree of flexibility for its adherents.

Make use of feat trees during this selection process whenever possible. Allowing progression according to a standard tree makes a style more effective as the character progresses in level and also helps keep its benefits coherent and focused.

2. Select Skills

The skills associated with a martial arts style are what make it more than just a set of combat abilities. While not as significant as feats, skills give a style a logical foundation and a certain depth, as well as providing reasonable prerequisites for mastery abilities.

As you did with feats, try to choose skills that seem to fit the image and focus of the style you have in mind. Fast, acrobatic styles might teach Tumble and Jump; styles tailored for ninjas, yakuzas, or rogues might include Escape Artist; and weapon-based styles might teach Craft (weaponsmithing).

Since monks and fighters tend to take up martial arts styles more often than other characters do, many of the skills associated with a new style should be class skills for those characters. Tailoring the skill set this way means that many of the skills are cross-class for characters who aren't so combat-oriented, although a generous DM might rule that they always count as class skills for any character actively studying the style.

3. Choose Mastery Abilities

Mastery abilities are the only unique, in-game benefits associated with martial arts styles. They are designed to reward the perseverance of a player who sacrifices a degree of flexibility in the selection of feats and skills to learn a particular style.

Mastery abilities enhance a style's unique flavor because they are not accessible to outsiders—not even to characters who know the same feats as a student of the style does. Although most mastery abilities are not overly powerful, they can provide focus for roleplaying and give a character something to work toward.

Choose one or two mastery abilities for your new style. Each should be relevant to the style's main focus and make its primary attack or defense forms more potent. Be sure to keep the power levels within reason; after all, a benefit that the character gains essentially for free should not provide too great an advantage. If you feel that a powerful mastery ability is really necessary for your style, balance it by making it a feat available only to adherents of the style. That way, the character must actually spend a feat slot to acquire it after meeting the prerequisites.

Once you know what the mastery abilities are, decide on the prerequisites needed to qualify for each. A character should have to learn at least four feats before gaining a mastery ability, and five or six might be better, particularly in an *Oriental Adventures* campaign, where monk characters can sacrifice class abilities in exchange for bonus feats. (You might, however, wish to add any style-associated feats you have pulled from other sources to the list of monk bonus feats.) Other prerequisites for a mastery ability might include a certain number of ranks in a relevant skill, or a minimum score in an ability. To some extent, however, ability score minimums might already be built into the style via the prerequisites for its associated feats.

4. Create Background

The final step in creating a unique martial arts style is to generate a background for it. What significance does this style have in your campaign world, and what is its history? Is it an ancient art known throughout the kingdom, or a confusing new invention from some rogue monastery?

Developing the story behind the new style can be a project for the players, the DM, or both. Chances are that a player

1,252 C.E.: The English Longbow

The English longbow, originally developed in Wales, now finds regular use in the English military. Long known for its deadly power in skirmishes, this weapon profoundly changes the face of warfare, although only England ever develops it as a battlefield weapon.

Composed of a single shaft of wood (preferably yew), the longbow measures approximately 5 to 6 feet in length. It has a pull of 80 to 120 pounds and an effective range of up to 250 yards. Against lightly armored enemies, the longbow is certain death. Against soldiers in plate armor, it is lethal at 200 yards.

The English military capitalizes on the killing power of its native archers, who swell the ranks of the army. Capable of sustaining fire at a rate of ten to twelve arrows per minute, archers quickly become the most feared units on the field. Throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, English bowmen turn the tide of many battles.

1,300 C.E.: The European Fortress

The castle period represents the zenith of fortification engineering. Many new designs are brought home from the Crusades by soldiers who have served in the Holy Land. Edward "Longshanks" I introduces the classical defensive elements of the era into a series of castles he constructs in England. Castles and fortresses with incredible defensive capabilities begin to appear all over Europe.

A typical fortress built during this period sports crenellated and rounded walls more than 10 feet thick, complete with towers designed to deflect siege weapons. Concentric walls surround the main keep, and exterior moats add to defensibility. Inner walls become higher so as to concentrate more archers in each quarter. Bailey castles are protected by walls at least 20 feet thick, and flanking curtain walls complete with parapets allow for cover fire from archers.

These fortification techniques spur the development of still better siege weaponry. The birth of the cannon soon invalidates the majority of fortification technology, rendering it obsolete within the next two or three centuries.

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Unique martial arts styles make for unique characters. Monks typically learn their art at remote monasteries, but what about other characters who choose to fight unarmed? How and where a character learned a particular martial arts style can explain many things about her background and help to define her motives for adventuring. Perhaps the samurai of her noble family routinely teach ancient unarmed fighting skills to young warriors. Or maybe her yakuza clan jealously guards the secret of its deadly, poison-fisted style, revealing it to none save their own. Or perhaps the character is a young wu jen whose master insisted that she hone her body as well as her mind during training.

The same principle also holds true for characters in western campaign settings. Barbarians from a particular clan might be feared throughout the frontier lands for their savage unarmed fighting style, which incorporates the ferocity and power of their spirit bear totem. Or a secretive thieves' guild might teach its young members a few assassination techniques that don't rely on conventional weapons.

Martial arts styles can also provide extra background color for characters from certain regions or races. What if the elves in your world are students of an ancient and little-known fighting style that draws its inspiration from the movements of wind and water? And what if your campaign's halflings practice a newer, much more aggressive version of that ancient art? Right away you have interesting options for fighter characters who prefer unarmed combat.

who is interested enough in a new style to develop a character based on it might also have a good idea for its place in the campaign world. Such a player would probably be happy to work with the DM on its development. On the other hand, if the players show little interest in the background of the style, then it's up to the DM to make it interesting. A player who isn't sure what sort of character to play next might just be inspired by a glowing description of a new style and the monastery where it is taught.

MARTIAL ARTS STYLES IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

If your players are eagerly awaiting the chance to roll up an adventuring party of stalwart monks to fight evil and right wrongs throughout the land, go ahead and create martial arts styles to your heart's content. If that's not the case, however, go easy at first. There's no point in spending hours creating fascinating new martial arts styles and lists of famous monk and fighter NPCs who have practiced them if your players aren't interested in fighting unarmed. One or two new styles, introduced with appropriate encounters and adventure hooks, should be sufficient to spark some interest in the concept. Once your players see the possibilities for exotic adventures, memorable characters, and new ways to kill bad guys, they might change their minds. Then you can spend the time to create more styles, knowing that the work will be appreciated.

NEW EASTERN STYLES

Below are some new martial arts styles built on Eastern models. These styles work well in Rokugan or any similar setting.

Blue Mountain Style

"In descending from the heights we watch our footing. The ground changes, and our feet move. The mountain would break us in our weakness, but we have already moved."
–Blue Mountain poem

Burukouzan, also called the Blue Mountain style, is a fierce and secretive fighting art practiced only in a few remote monasteries. Its secrets are closely guarded, and only rarely do the Burukouzan masters teach them to outsiders. Generations of warriors have sought out Burukouzan masters for training, but the monks turn away all except the very stoutest of heart.

The Blue Mountain fighting style stresses speed and dazzling kick attacks. Fighters who practice it disdain the use of weapons.

Blue Mountain masters are typically lawful good and dedicated to the triumph of virtue over wrongdoing. The Burukouzan monks believe that noble deeds in this life are rewarded tenfold in the next.

Feats: Circle Kick*, Fists of Iron*, Flying Dragon Kick†, Flying Kick**, Great *Ki* Shout**, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder,

1,346 C.E.: The Cannon
The first cannon is little more than a brass or iron vase that uses gunpowder to eject a metal ball. These small, primitive devices appear on the battlefield for the first time at the Battle of Crecy (see below), where the English utilize them against the French army. But the weapons prove ineffective because the balls don't have enough power to penetrate the plate armor of the French cavalry. Furthermore, the dangers involved in using gunpowder and the imprecise nature of the weapons themselves make them difficult to manage on the field.

Although the cannon's effectiveness proves dubious in this battle, the concept takes hold, and firearm technology evolves slowly over the next three centuries. Cannons grow larger, and gunpowder mixtures become safer and more effective.

1,346 C.E.: Longbow Domination
While returning from France after a partially successful campaign, Edward III and his army of 15,000 Englishmen are cornered near the town of Crecy by France's Philip VI and his 30,000 French soldiers. The English army takes a position atop a low ridge with a gentle slope. The soldiers arrange themselves in angled lines shaped like the letter W—the classic double wedge formation—with archers forming the wings and the center of the formation and footsoldiers guarding the center flanks. The footsoldiers mine the slope with steel caltrops designed to slow down and break an enemy charge.

Philip's French army is composed of heavy cavalry, light and heavy infantry, and more than 6,000 Genoese crossbowmen. Overeager to annihilate the English invaders, the French army haphazardly charges. The highly disciplined, well-trained English archers that make up almost half of Edward's force rain a barrage of arrows so deadly that scores of heavily armored French knights (many of them nobles) die before ever engaging the English footsoldiers.

Philip signals the Genoese crossbowmen to attack, and a direct struggle between crossbow and longbow begins. The longbow quickly proves

Improved Unarmed Strike, *Ki* Shout**, Mantis Leap*, Power Attack, Power Lunge*, Roundabout Kick**.

Blue Mountain Mastery I
You have mastered the initial secrets of the Blue Mountain martial arts style—a hard form emphasizing leaps, kicks, and blows with the hands. This level of mastery grants you the ability to leap into battle.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Dex 14, 4 or more ranks of Jump, Flying Kick**, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, *Ki* Shout**, Power Attack, Roundabout Kick**.

Benefit: Anytime you make a successful Jump check, you can choose to travel 5 feet of extra distance (vertical or horizontal) when you beat the given DC. Thus, a successful Jump check (DC 10) for a long jump allows you to jump up to 15 feet instead of 10. This extra distance counts normally against your speed for the purpose of determining how far you can move during a round.

Blue Mountain Mastery II
You have mastered the deeper secrets of the Blue Mountain martial arts style. You can now move with blinding speed.

Prerequisites: Str 14, Dex 16, 4 or more ranks of Balance, 8 or more ranks of Jump , Circle Kick*, Flying Dragon Kick†, Great *Ki* Shout**, Blue Mountain Mastery I.

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus on your initiative rolls.

Black Panda Style

"Let the dead bury the dead."
—Black Panda proverb

The Black Panda style is taught only in a few remote locales, although stories of its practitioners are told far and wide. Legend holds that Kurokuma, the first Black Panda master, learned the art when he slew a mighty forest spirit in panda form. For his cruel deed, Kurokuma was transformed into a cursed immortal.

Black Panda is a circular style that emphasizes blocks and defensive forms. Its true strength, however, lies in a series of strange and fearful maneuvers called atemi, or "vital strike" attacks. Students of the Black Panda style typically fight unarmed, although most carry darts or shuriken for ranged attacks, and a few occasionally employ the kama.

Black Panda masters are typically lawful evil, although they accept students of any alignment. Each student must undergo a harsh, two-year regimen of mental and physical study before training can begin.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Death Blow*, Dodge, Extra Stunning Attacks*, Falling Star Strike**, Freezing the Lifeblood**, Distant Touch†, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Pain Touch**, Stone Monkey†, Stunning Fist, Superior Expertise**.

Black Panda Mastery I
You have mastered the initial secrets of the Black Panda martial arts style—a soft form emphasizing movement and stunning attacks. At this level of mastery, you learn the secret of aiming your blows against vital areas.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Wis 15, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Pain Touch**, Stunning Fist.

Benefit: The save DC against an

FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

If you're a DM, consider how the introduction of a customized martial arts style might provide springboards for adventures. Perhaps training in the desired style is not readily available, and the character wishing to learn it must first seek out a teacher in a remote area. The search itself might involve a quest, or the teacher might require the candidate to prove himself worthy of acceptance by completing some difficult task. Once training begins, the character's mentor or fellow students can provide still more adventuring opportunities. For example, perhaps a once-promising student of the same master has turned his skills to wicked ends and become the city's most feared assassin. The character must find and defeat the rogue student before his activities bring more shame and dishonor to other adherents of the style.

Unarmed fighting styles can also make seemingly inconsequential foes far more dangerous than they appear. In eastern campaign settings, it's not uncommon for palace guards to be experts at unarmed combat, and even simple villagers can be accomplished masters. This technique can be even more effective in western campaigns, where players aren't expecting it. Drop a few hints ahead of time that the warriors of a local goblin tribe practice a deadly style of knife-fighting, and then spring a band of cunning goblin fighter/monks on the unsuspecting party. A few such tricks should keep your PCs on their toes for months.

more deadly because of its exceptional range and rapid rate of fire. The English archers can shoot twelve to fifteen arrows in the time it takes the Genoese crossbowmen to fire three bolts, and the arrows have much longer range. After an initial exchange, thousands of Genoese lie dead or dying, and the survivors flee.

During the first 5 minutes of the battle, the English archers fire more than 30,000 arrows, killing thousands of French soldiers. Witnesses to the carnage liken the arrows falling from the sky to snowflakes in winter. The French soldiers continue to attack in waves, only to be stopped by the massive firepower of the English archers. Afterward, more than 15,000 French soldiers, including 11 princes and 1,200 knights, are dead. English casualties number fewer than 1,000. Subsequent battles in what will become known as the Hundred Years War propel archers to the forefront of military strategy. For the first time in many years, cavalry units become helpless before the power of the footsoldier. Not for another two centuries, when equine armor at last becomes available, can cavalry units once again claim a dominant role on the battlefield.

1,400 C.E.: Full Plate Armor
Developments in European weaponry continue to be paced by developments in armor. Prior to the 15th century, chainmail with a gambeson and shield provided adequate protection for combat, but as higher-quality weaponry gains widespread use, the inadequacies of the common chain hauberk become apparent.

Chainmail proves useless against the pounding force of a flanged mace or a morningstar, and a well-crafted longsword can remove an armored limb with a single blow. Furthermore, the penetrating power of the crossbow and English longbow are lethal to chainmail-clad soldiers. The impact of such missiles is so powerful that fragments of chain links often embed themselves in the wearer's skin. Thus, even a soldier who survives a battle is often at risk of death from tetanus or infection.

The gradual augmentation of chainmail armor with metal plates culminates in the creation of elaborate plate armor that eventually replaces

MARTIAL ARTS CAMPAIGN IDEAS

Having trouble thinking up ideas for a campaign oriented toward martial arts? You can use any of the concepts below to create a campaign in which martial arts is the primary fighting style, or you might want to adapt them to accommodate one or two players who want to play wandering martial artists in a more traditional campaign. Any of these ideas would fit easily into the Rokugan setting or, with only minimal tinkering, into Greyhawk or even the Forgotten Realms. Used creatively, martial arts styles can give players and DMs dozens of options for interesting campaign twists, new feats, homegrown prestige classes, and memorable characters.

- The characters are all monks from the same monastery who have been charged with a great responsibility, such as protecting the mountain passes from encroaching bakemono hordes, or guarding the forgotten vault of a demon lord who was imprisoned eons ago. In a situation like this, the players can collaborate to create the temple's signature fighting style. Since all the characters are learning the same style, it should be highly customizable, with plenty of associated feats and skills to provide maximum flexibility in character design.
- A group of renegade half-elves famous for their exotic fighting technique is wreaking havoc on the underworld society in a major city, and only those who are trained in martial arts have the necessary skills to go after them.
- The campaign takes place in a society based more closely on feudal Japan, with its rigid social caste structure, than on the Rokugan setting. Instead of privileged samurai and shugenja, the characters are lower-class commoners. Forbidden to use weapons, they instead pursue martial arts training in secret, becoming champions of the common peasants against the tyranny of their cruel samurai masters. In such a campaign, one major style might be practiced in each region, or each character class could use a different style. For example, monks and fighters might commonly learn a fast-paced attack style, rogues a sneaky, underhanded style, and shamans and sohei a meditative, defense-based style.
- The finest students of their respective masters and schools, the characters are dispatched as a group to discover the source of a new and terrifying fighting style being practiced by a secretive and dangerous clan of assassins. Such a campaign could feature all high-level characters, each practicing a unique martial arts style.

unarmed attack you make with the Stunning Fist feat is increased by 2.

Normal: Without this feat, the save DC against an attack you make with the Stunning Fist feat is 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Wisdom modifier.

Black Panda Mastery II

You have mastered the deeper secrets of the Black Panda martial arts style. You have now perfected the art of the debilitating strike.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Wis 19, 4 or more ranks of Balance, Extra Stunning Attacks*, Freezing the Lifeblood**, Distant Toucht, Black Panda Mastery I.

Benefit: In addition to its normal damage, your unarmed attack deals 1 point of Constitution damage when used in conjunction with the Distant Touch, Freezing the Lifeblood, Pain Touch, or Stunning Fist feat. The target may attempt a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Wisdom modifier) to negate the Constitution damage. Constitution points lost via this attack can be restored in any of the normal ways.

Koumajutsu (Demon Wrestling)

"Fumu broke the wall asunder with his fists and dragged the demon through by its hair. Although the creature fought fiercely, biting Fumu's hands and clawing at his eyes, Fumu gripped it tighter and leaped into the chasm. The demon swore and cursed as they fell, but Fumu made no cry. And ever after they brought flowers to the ravine and blessed his name under the earth."
—The Legend of Kaibatsu Fumusama

This powerful, violent style is practiced primarily among the korobokuru barbarian tribes. Many korobokuru legends describe the battles of their ancient war chieftains against demons from across the sea. The greatest of these warriors would grapple with the monsters hand-to-hand, often until both were destroyed.

The Koumajutsu style emphasizes strength training and makes effective use of locks and holds. Although most students of the style are korobokuru, human warriors occasionally seek out Koumajutsu masters as well. Demon wrestlers rarely carry weapons into battle, although they

chainmail altogether. The intricate and highly specialized craft of manufacturing platemail sets a new standard for defensive attire. Platemail proliferates for the next two centuries, keeping pace with weaponry advances.

Platemail becomes the hallmark of knights and elite mounted warriors. Despite its immense weight and relative inflexibility, soldiers trained in its use remain remarkably mobile. Its effectiveness stems not from the thickness of the armor itself (although that does contribute) but rather from its design. Its sloping surfaces and cunningly designed angles deflect blows, directing force away from the point of impact rather than simply absorbing it. Constant attempts to perfect platemail as newer and better weaponry appears lead to an incredible degree of sophistication.

The advent of handguns heralds the end of platemail as a battleground standard. Firearms can easily punch through even the best plate armor, negating its protective qualities. Full plate armor is relegated to ceremonial use within the space of a century as its detrimental effect on mobility begins to outpace its protective benefits. Despite platemail's fall from favor, however, elements of its design continue to see consistent use until the 21st century, most notably in the use of breastplates, military helmets, and modern-day tactical armor.

1,420 C.E.: Mobile Artillery

Jan Zizka, leader of a religious and political reform movement in eastern Europe, creates "war wagons"—heavily armored conveyances arranged to fight defensively in a squared formation. Inside each, he mounts specially created cannons that can fire multiple balls and shot. This multiple-shot feature proves devastating at short range. Other eastern European strategists quickly adopt similar techniques, applying them to handheld firearms for use at point-blank range.

The mobility of his cannons allows Jan to achieve victories that previously would have been impossible, particularly considering that his soldiers are otherwise ill equipped. Mobile

sometimes wear armor decorated with heavy spikes.

Koumajutsu masters teach the virtues of the clan warrior: courage, tenacity, and relentlessness in the pursuit of foes. Practitioners of Koumajutsu are typically neutral or chaotic in alignment.

Feats: Choke Hold**, Close-Quarters Fighting*, Dirty Fighting*, Defensive Strike**, Earth's Embrace**, Fists of Iron*, Grappling Block**, Improved Grapple, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, *Ki* Shout**, Knock-Down*, Power Attack, Power Lunge*, Prone Attack*, Stunning Fist.

Koumajutsu Mastery I
You have mastered the initial secrets of the Koumajutsu martial arts style—a hard/soft form emphasizing locks, holds, and grappling attacks. At this level of mastery, you learn to grapple more effectively.

Prerequisites: Str 15, Choke Hold**, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on all grapple checks.

Koumajutsu Mastery II
You have mastered the deeper secrets of the Koumajutsu martial arts style. You have now perfected your grappling technique.

Prerequisites: Str 17, Earth's Embrace**, Fists of Iron*, Knock-Down*, Power Attack, Ten Ox Stompt, Koumajutsu Mastery I.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on all grapple checks. This bonus stacks with the bonus granted by Koumajutsu Mastery I.

NEW WESTERN STYLES

The following martial arts styles are built on Western models. These styles work well in any standard fantasy campaign setting.

Temerad

"No direction is correct, so any direction must be subject to instant change. The eye must see in every direction, and the ear must hear in every direction."
—Methelas the Old, from the Eight Rules

Possibly the oldest form of unarmed combat, the ancient art of Temerad was first practiced by elf pilgrims and seekers of wisdom. Although elves are the primary users of this style, Temerad masters do occasionally accept students of other races, provided that their hearts are pure and they truly seek enlightenment among the trees.

As suggested by its name (which means "from wind and water" in Elven), Temerad is based on the movements of natural forces. A practitioner of this style confounds her opponent by moving constantly, seemingly reacting to blows even before they are struck. Temerad fighters rarely use weapons, although some warriors combine this style with the sword-fighting techniques practiced by most elves.

Temerad emphasizes humility and harmony with nature. Its masters accept only students who are good in alignment.

Feats: Blind-Fight, Blindsight 5-Foot Radius*, Circle Kick*, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Extra Stunning Attacks*, Improved Disarm, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Fists*, Mobility, Snatch Arrows, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist.

Note: Temerad practitioners never strike first in battle. Striking at any opponent that has not already attacked you results in the loss of all Temerad mastery abilities for 24 hours.

Temerad Mastery I
You have mastered the initial secrets of the Temerad martial arts style—a soft form emphasizing movement and defense. At this level of mastery, you learn to move like the wind.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Spring Attack.

Benefit: The dodge bonus you gain from the Dodge feat rises to +2. You can choose to apply the entire bonus against a single attacker or split it

FEATS FOR MARTIAL ARTS STYLES

In addition to the feats described in the *Player's Handbook*, many feats described in the *Oriental Adventures* rulebook and in *Sword and Fist* work well with martial arts styles. The new styles detailed here utilize feats from both of these sources, as well as a few new ones detailed in this article. The following symbols are used throughout to designate the sources of feats not found in the *Player's Handbook*.

*Feat from *Sword and Fist*.
**Feat from *Oriental Adventures*.
†New feat (see below).

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firepower becomes an important ingredient for success on the battlefield.

1,450 C.E.: Breech-Loaded Artillery
One of the last battles of the Hundred Years War, the Battle of Formigny, occurs after the French break the Truce of Tours. England invades France with more than 5,000 soldiers (2,800 of them archers) under the leadership of Thomas Kyriel.

As he had in other battles in the Hundred Years War, Kyriel forms his army into the classic double wedge formation, but France's Comte de Cleremont unveils a new strategy—the first mobile, breech-loaded artillery. The firing rate and range of these weapons overpowers the English archers, who cannot get close enough to return fire. Left with no other choice, the remnants of the English archer units and infantry charge the French artillery, only to find French reinforcements moving in to surround them. Kyriel's army is destroyed, and the English lose their hold on the European continent.

This battle marks the beginning of the longbow's demise as a battlefield staple. While its use continues for several more centuries, its dominance on the field lessens as the years move on. It is eventually dropped in favor of firearms.

1,450 C.E.: The Harquebus
The Spanish invent the harquebus, the first shoulder-fired firearm. This device utilizes an implement known as a serpentine—a trigger-released cord soaked in saltpeter that is applied to a burning match and dipped into the pan of gunpowder. A long barrel gives the harquebus a greater range than any other firearm of the era, but it is still no match for a longbow in terms of distance. Its major advantage is its ability to inflict injury through any kind of armor. Since infection in even minor wounds is both commonplace and deadly, this feature gives the device a significant edge over other ranged weapons, despite its unreliability.

The harquebus serves as a model for firearms development to come. The continued evolution of such weapons finally brings an end to the age of swords and armor.

between two designated attackers, gaining a +1 dodge bonus against each.

Temerad Mastery II
You have mastered the deeper secrets of the Temerad martial arts style. You can now move as fluidly as the water.

Prerequisites: Dex 19, 8 or more ranks of Balance, Deflect Arrows, Extra Stunning Attacks, Lightning Fists*, Stunning Fist, Temerad Mastery I.

Benefit: You gain a +1 insight bonus to Armor Class.

Broken Fist

"If they strike with a sword, break the sword. If they strike with an arrow, cut the arrow."
–Bedobaris Two-Foot, halfling warmaster

Broken Fist (a name given half in jest) is an upstart style perfected by halfling monks. Some say it has its roots in the graceful, unarmed movements of Temerad; others claim it is based on the fighting style of wild dogs. Broken Fist masters rarely agree on either the history or the traditions of the form, and they practice no orderly doctrine or philosophy aside from basic survival.

Like Temerad, Broken Fist is essentially a movement-based style. But instead of defense and artistry, Broken Fist masters teach their students to use their speed and agility to strike first and strike hard. Any weapons that can be adapted for easy use with the style are encouraged.

Broken Fist masters are typically neutral in alignment. Most accept only halfling monks and warriors as students, although some gnome and dwarf practitioners of the style have appeared in recent years.

Feats: Circle Kick*, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Death Blow*, Dirty Fighting*, Dodge, Extra Stunning Attacks*, Fists of Iron*, Lightning Fists*, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Knock-Down*, Mobility, Prone Attack*, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Whirlwind Attack.

Broken Fist Mastery I
You have mastered the initial secrets of the Broken Fist martial arts style–a hard/soft form emphasizing movement, knockdowns, and fast strikes. At this level of mastery, you become adept at knocking opponents off their feet.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Dirty Fighting, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Benefit: You are treated as one size category larger than you actually are for the purpose of trip attempts.

Broken Fist Mastery II
You have mastered the deeper secrets of the Broken Fist martial arts style. You know how to knock opponents to the ground.

Prerequisites: Knock-Down*, Lightning Fists*, Whirlwind Attack, Broken Fist Mastery I.

Benefit: You gain a bonus equal to one-half your character level on Strength checks made to trip an opponent or to avoid being tripped.

NEW FEATS

The following new feats are in the general category, so they are available to any character who qualifies for them. Both are eminently suitable for characters wishing to focus on unarmed combat.

Distant Touch

You can strike from a distance with a stunning attack.

Prerequisites: Wis 19, 4 or more ranks of Concentration, Pain Touch**, Stunning Fist, base attack bonus +8.

Benefit: By intensely focusing your *ki,* you can gain the benefits of either the Pain Touch or the Stunning Fist feat with a ranged attack (range increment 10 feet). To use this ability, make a normal ranged attack using your unarmed attack bonuses. If successful, the Stunning Fist or Pain Touch attack affects the target even though you did not touch your foe.

Stone Monkey

Your unarmed attack can partially paralyze an opponent's limbs.

Prerequisites: Wis 15, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist.

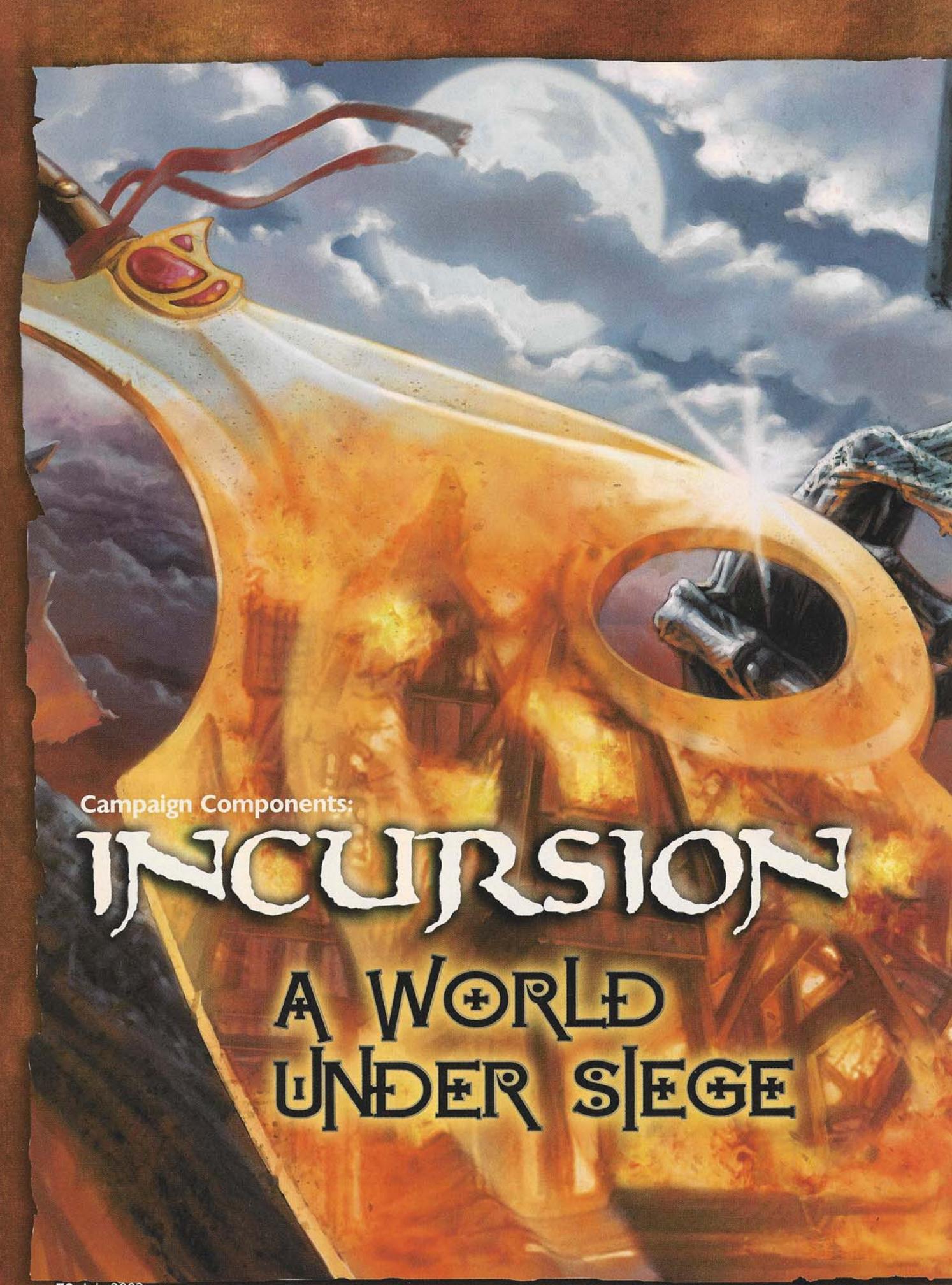
Benefit: With a successful grapple check, you can try to partially disable one of your opponent's arms or legs by gripping and twisting it. An opponent subjected to this attack must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Wisdom modifier) or take a -2 penalty on all rolls and checks made for actions involving that limb for 1d6+1 rounds. Furthermore, all forms of movement involving that limb are reduced by 5 feet (minimum 0 feet). No limb can be affected more than once. This attack counts as one of the possible options you can use while grappling (see Grapple in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*) and affects the creature if you succeed at a grapple check. D

1,476 C.E.: The Supremacy of the Infantry
A relatively new weapon called the halberd first appears on the field when the Swiss go to war against a French army consisting primarily of mounted knights. The Swiss halberdiers disdain the use of heavy armor, preferring greater mobility even in the presence of cannons, archers, and crossbowmen. To engage the numerically superior French cavalry, the Swiss troops form into squares known as Schlachthaufen (or battle squares), each of which has eighty men to a side. With the aid of their halberds, they quickly unmount the French knights. Once grounded, the heavily armored cavalry riders fall to the slashing halberds of the mobile Swiss soldiers.

This use of highly mobile, heavily armed footsoldiers at last dethrones the armored cavalry unit from its position of eminence. More importantly, it marks the decline of heavy armor for battlefield use. Mobility becomes paramount, particularly when dealing with firearms. The battle square formation represents the next stage in the evolution of battlefield tactics, and other nations quickly adopt similar techniques.

1,500 C.E.+: Age of the Gun
While the use of sword, armor, shield, and bow do not end at the same time in all places, the proliferation of firearms eventually brings their use to a halt everywhere. Fortification engineering changes dramatically, ending the era of the castle. The efficiency and sheer destructive capability of firearms spurs the development of new tactics for waging war.

The harquebus and cannon eventually give way to new technologies that allow nations to wage war on one another from half a world away and fight from the skies. As mankind's reach extends into new frontiers, still other new armaments will no doubt be devised. No one can know what the face of war will be like when humans walk among the stars, but it is certain that warfare will continue to evolve along with, or perhaps ahead of, the rest of human endeavor. D



Campaign Components:

INCURSION

A WORLD UNDER SIEGE

by James Wyatt

illustrated by Wayne Reynolds, Marc Sasso, and David Wahlstrom

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The sky darkens, and flame rains down. Here and there the smoke thins to provide glimpses of wheeling dragons, and the shouted commands of their inhuman riders are audible above the screams of the people below. From their alien fortresses on the Astral Plane, the githyanki have come. This time, they are not simply raiding, establishing a new hatchery, or pillaging cities for supplies. No, this time the githyanki have come to stay, and the world will never be the same.

The Incursion campaign explores what might happen when war comes to your world. Specifically, the storyline traces the inception, progress, and culmination of a githyanki invasion from the Astral Plane.

Wreaking Havoc for Fun and Profit

Why would you want to set the githyanki loose on your defenseless campaign? What could possibly motivate you to unleash so much chaos on the campaign world you have lovingly worked to develop for so long? In a word: fun.

An invasion introduces a new level of excitement and danger into any campaign, and an invasion of githyanki is a threat that even epic characters won't quickly shrug off. At the same time, a low racial Challenge Rating and flexible advancement by class make githyanki ideal opponents for characters of all levels. The githyanki are one of the most intriguing villainous races ever created for the Dungeons & Dragons game, and bringing them back from their Astral Plane exile lets them take center stage in your campaign.

Beyond the fun factor, a war offers you the opportunity to change the face of your campaign world, eliminating elements you might have

HOW THE GATES WORK

Each time the lich-queen opens a *gate* from the Astral Plane, she can send through an incredible number of troops to work her will on the Material Plane. Before the *gate* opens, the githyanki commanders arrange the soldiers in a tight formation of four columns. As soon as the 20-foot-wide *gate* appears, the githyanki start moving through, each soldier remaining close behind the one in front. This arrangement enables 320 hustling githyanki to move through per round. As a 25th-level wizard, the lich-queen can hold the *gate* open for 25 rounds, allowing 8,000 soldiers to march through.

Astral ships must pass through a *gate* in single file (except for the astral skiffs, which are only 5 feet wide). Like the soldiers, the ships are lined up in tight formation, and the slower ships—the long planar raiders—always go through first. One planar raider can move through the *gate* per round (speed 50 feet, length 100 feet), then three astral brigs per round (speed 90 feet, length 60 feet), and finally 64 astral skiffs per round (speed 120 feet, length 15 feet, in rows of four). Thus, with a single *gate* spell, the lich-queen can send through 9 planar raiders, 24 astral brigs, and 512 astral skiffs, for a total of more than 3,800 soldiers if all are filled to capacity.

As a 25th-level wizard with access to 10th- and 11th-level spells, the lich-queen can cast as many as nine *gate* spells in a single day. The description of her tactics in this article is intentionally vague about how many soldiers are involved at any given time, since you'll want to decide the size of any given force based on the needs of your campaign. It is generally safe to assume, however, that those nine *gate* spells are enough to put her forces where she wants them. She might occasionally have to open multiple *gates* when this article speaks of only one, particularly in the case of the third *gate*, which she uses to pour huge numbers of soldiers into an area she already controls.

With nine daily *gate* spells at her disposal, the lich-queen could even move a fairly large army to the Astral Plane with one *gate* and then to a different location on the Material Plane with a second *gate*. The planar travel function of the *gate* spell does not have an XP cost, so she can cast the spell as often as desired to maximize the mobility and effectiveness of her troops.

been dissatisfied with and replacing them with new ones. You're running a FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign and you're sick of the characters running to Elminster for help? Bad news for the players—the githyanki have arrived, and Elminster is at the top of their hit list. (As an added bonus, Elminster's demise ensures that the PCs will regard the invasion with appropriate gravity!) You're playing in GREYHAWK and the Theocracy of the Pale has always bugged you? Let the githyanki wipe it from the face of Oerth. Then you can replace it with whatever suits your fancy—perhaps an oppressive nation ruled by githyanki, or a strong rebel force that moved into the power vacuum left by the Theocracy's fall.

You certainly don't need a major cataclysm to incorporate the changes introduced in the new revision of the D&D core rules, but if you want a rationale for these changes, Incursion can provide it. For example, monks trained to fight githyanki must learn a variety of martial arts styles, so some choose Combat Reflexes as a bonus feat instead of the more traditional Deflect Arrows. Rangers and bards can also learn new techniques during the course of the war. Perhaps the influx of energies from the Astral Plane even distorts the workings of magic, so that certain spells (such as *haste* and *bull's strength*) no longer work quite the same way that they did before.

Perhaps most importantly, a war offers opportunities for trying out new and different styles of play and unusual types of adventures. Most people probably think of mass battles first when they think about war, and Incursion certainly offers plenty of opportunities for those. At the same time, however, a war creates a variety of other adventuring opportunities. Espionage is by no means an invention of the modern age; spies of any era really shine in times of war. A player who wants to take on the role of a medieval James Bond can find a perfect opportunity to do so here, since reconnaissance and counterintelligence are essential components of any successful defense against the githyanki invasion. In addition, characters could undertake missions to foil githyanki assassins, capture enemy spies (or simply feed them false information), escape from a prisoner-of-war camp, or break into one for a rescue. In fact, just about any mission that has been attempted in a war or spy movie can be incorporated into the Incursion campaign.

ALTERNATIVE INVASIONS

The githyanki make an ideal invading force. They are magically powerful (especially the leaders—the lich-queen Vlaakith is a 25th-level wizard), and it is this power that makes many of the tactics described in this article possible. However, they are also eminently scalable foes—the fact that they advance by character class means that low-level characters can fight low-level githyanki soldiers, while high-level characters can fight high-level githyanki knights and warlocks.

That said, it is certainly possible to use the ideas outlined here to build a campaign around an invasion by some other kind of creature—drow, demons, beholders, dragons, or something else entirely. One of the key elements that makes the githyanki invaders so devastating is their mobility—specifically their command of flying ships, their red dragon mounts, and their *dimension door* ability. To utilize the military tactics described in this article effectively, you need to give your invaders a similar degree of mobility. A horde of fiends from the Abyss that have the innate ability to use *greater teleport* certainly meets that criterion, although it might be much harder to involve lower-level characters in a war against such creatures. A campaign like this could begin at 10th level or so, perhaps with the PCs encountering demon scouts, and continue well into epic levels (25th or higher). Dragons, with their natural ability to fly, are similarly mobile opponents.

Whatever kind of creatures you choose for the invading force, you need an evil genius—preferably one with mighty magic at her disposal—directing the attack. If the invading force comes from another plane, the ability to use *gate* would allow a powerful spellcaster to send large numbers of troops to a specific point on the Material Plane—even to a spot inside a walled fortification. The githyanki make excellent use of this tactic, but drow invading from the Plane of Shadow could easily do the same. (Such drow might possess a few distinctive spell-like abilities that other drow don't because of their adaptation to the

ASTRAL BRIG

Plane of Shadow. These abilities could make them similar to the githyanki in many ways.)

Scalability is an extremely important consideration when using other kinds of invaders. The sidebars in this article provide statistics for githyanki opponents ranging from CR 2 to CR 17, as well as sample encounters from EL 5 to EL 20. You could replace these githyanki with drow, githzerai, sahuagin, tieflings, shades (from the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*), or even orcs with little impact on the difficulty of the encounters described. But it would be much more difficult to do the same with beholders, which typically occupy a very narrow range of Challenge Ratings. To make the lower-level encounters work with powerful invaders, consider giving them a servant race. For example, invading mind flayers might send armies of grimlocks ahead of their elite illithid troops. Such a vanguard would provide lower-level characters with suitable opponents. You might invent a new extraplanar humanoid race to make up the bulk of a demonic invasion force, or use tiefling hordes commanded by the lesser demons.

Finally, the Incursion campaign as described here assumes that the campaign ends when the PCs travel to the Astral Plane and defeat the lich-queen (as described in "The Lich-Queen's Beloved" in *Dungeon* #100) at around 18th level. If you use another kind of monster as the invading force, there is no need to end the invasion at that level; it might stretch well into epic levels, as mentioned above. Still, you should probably envision some kind of climactic encounter that marks the turning point of the campaign, even if it doesn't end the action. You could use an event that closely parallels the defeat of the lich-queen (such as a journey to another plane to confront the evil mastermind), or you could come up with a different way to turn the tide of battle (traveling in secret to Mount Doom to destroy the evil mastermind's ring of power, for example).

The Invasion

The premise of the Incursion campaign is the arrival on the Material Plane of a githyanki army bent on conquest. This section presents the motivation behind the invasion, outlines options for incorporating it into your campaign, provides a method for tracking its progress easily, and offers specific suggestions for adventures and campaign arcs.

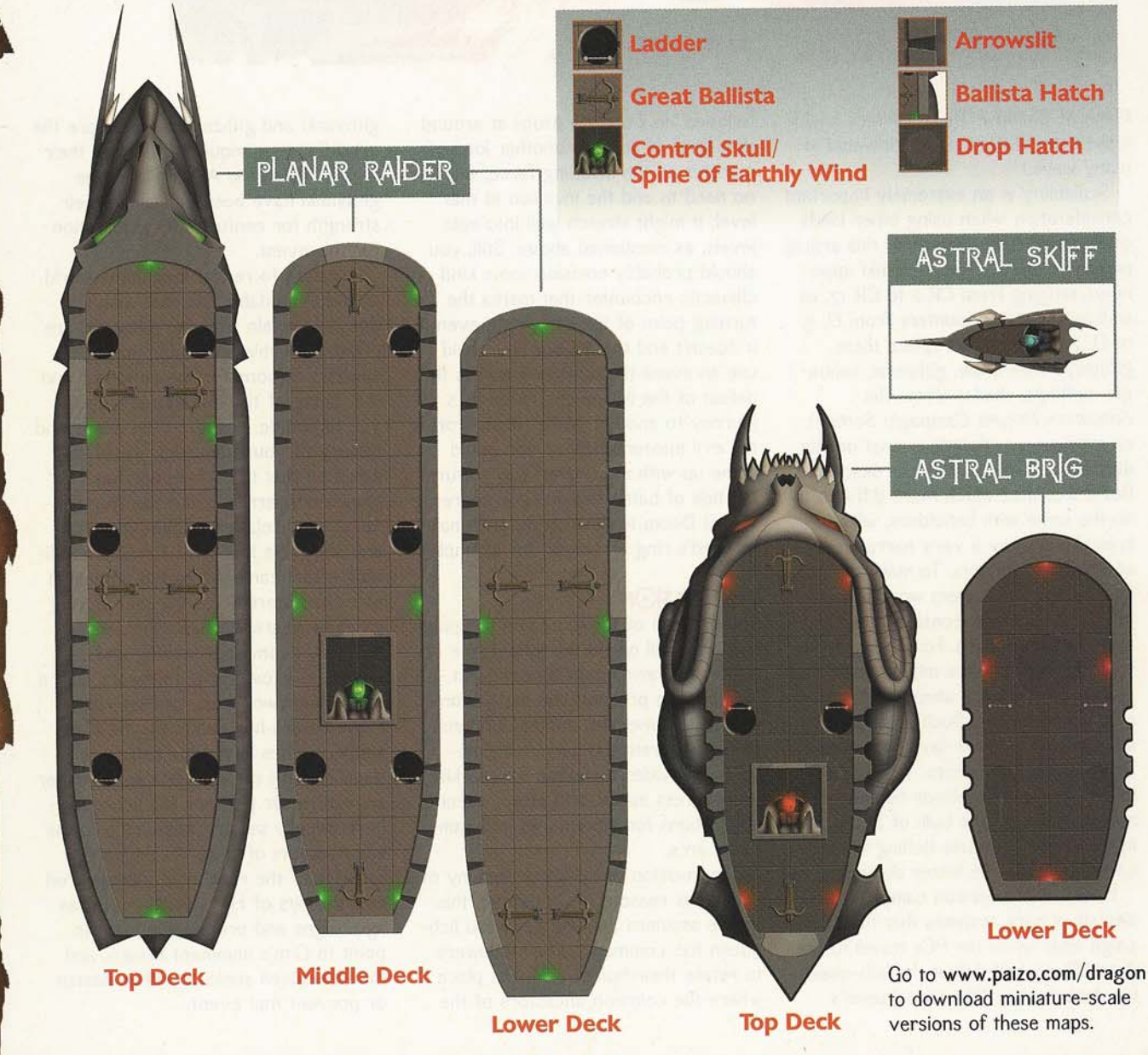
The invasion could occur for any of numerous reasons. As a default, this article assumes that the githyanki lich-queen has commanded her followers to retake their homeworld—the place where the common ancestors of the githyanki and githzerai lived before the mind flayers conquered them. In their fortresses on the Astral Plane, the githyanki have been mustering their strength for centuries in preparation for this event.

A desire to retake their homeworld is understandable, but that alone doesn't explain why the githyanki are invading at this particular time. The specific reasons for the conquest and the timing of the invasion are up to you to decide, based on the needs and history of your campaign world. It could be that the lich-queen has grown concerned about the fragmentation and isolation of the githyanki, and she feels that only a massive military effort can reforge the unity that was characteristic of the race during its early years. Perhaps she senses her final doom approaching and wishes to provide her followers with a stable homeworld on the Material Plane before her death. Maybe she simply wishes to die (or enter demilichdom) on the homeworld of her ancestors. Or perhaps the lich-queen is frantically seeking some clue to the whereabouts of Gith, the primordial founder of the race, who disappeared into the pits of Hell untold centuries ago. Signs and prophecies seem to point to Gith's imminent return, and the lich-queen seeks to either hasten or prevent that event.

More fantastic possibilities exist as well. The "Knights of the Lich-Queen" game in *Dungeon* #100 describes a default campaign setting in which the lich-queen's goal is to find the corpse of the ancient deity worshiped by the ancestors of the gith races. According to the game, this divine corpse was lost long ago in a deep chasm in the Wasting Desert on the world of Pharagos, but you might decide that it's resting in a desolate wilderness area of your own campaign world. Wherever it lies, the corpse is surrounded by a maelstrom of magical activity and guarded by a panoply of outsiders—either celestials or fiends. Alternatively, some residents of your campaign world might be loudly bragging—truly or not—that they have discovered the tomb of Gith. The lich-queen could decide that the best way to punish such upstart blasphemers is to destroy their entire world. If the tomb of Gith truly is there, she might also want to obliterate it before any more of her people start making pilgrimages to see it.

There could also be other reasons for this massive invasion that have nothing to do with conquering the world. For example, the lich-queen might have mobilized her people not for the conquest of their homeworld, but for a massive retributive crusade to exterminate the mind flayers from the Material Plane. The githyanki consider the surface cities nothing more than impediments to their goal—accessing the subterranean lairs of the illithids—so they simply attack and destroy surface settlements to get at what lies underneath. The brunt of their assault is, of course, directed toward the mind flayers rather than the surface-dwellers, although it might not seem so at first.

The invasion is the key element of an Incursion campaign, whatever the reasoning behind it. Your next important decision is where the githyanki will arrive. There are two primary options, and your choice depends on several factors. Do you want the invasion to take center stage in your campaign immediately, or come into play gradually? Do you want its greatest impact to be at the center of your



Go to www.paizo.com/dragon to download miniature-scale versions of these maps.

campaign activity or in outlying areas? If you want the invasion to become the center of your campaign right away and possibly to have a large impact on your primary campaign area, then let the githyanki arrive right in the center of activity. Otherwise, choose a location more distant from the campaign's action for the invasion to begin.

Scouts Before the Storm

The Astral Plane is a timeless realm in which creatures neither age nor grow. The egg-laying githyanki therefore maintain hatchery outposts (called varsh'isks) on many Material Plane worlds so that their young can hatch and mature. At such facilities, caretakers tend the eggs, and githwarriors and warlocks train the young githyanki in the arts of war. For the youngsters, every activity is a war exercise.

These hatcheries serve a military purpose as well—they make ideal bases for scouts and spies assigned to observe the Material Plane. Regardless of the underlying reason you choose for the invasion, the reports from such scouts are crucial to the lich-queen's decision to invade this particular world at this time. Thus, allowing the PCs to encounter one of these hatchery outposts well in advance of the invasion can be a very effective foreshadowing of events to come.

As the invasion draws nearer, the lich-queen's agents begin to scout the selected world more thoroughly, identifying appropriate targets and locating a desirable arrival point for the githyanki armies. Encounters with small parties of githyanki should grow more numerous during this time.

Pre-Invasion Strategy

The lich-queen is one of the most intelligent beings in the universe, ranking just below the oldest gold dragons and above many deities in sheer brain power. Thus, she will not lead her armies to certain destruction, nor will she make her secret goals obvious through her selection of targets.

Because her armies are strong, she is likely to select the most powerful military force on your campaign world as her primary target. But before committing any significant number of troops to military action, the lich-queen tries to exert control over as

VESSELS OF WAR

On the Astral Plane, the githyanki commonly wage war from massive astral ships. Such vessels can be equivalent in size to anything from a small keelboat with room for a single squad of soldiers to a massive galleon that can carry hundreds of troops. Powered by magic sails that catch the motion of astral energies, these ships are normally useless on the Material Plane, where no such arcane winds blow.

For centuries, however, the githyanki have worked together to create magic items that allow certain astral ships to fly through the skies of a Material Plane world. Armed with a *spine of earthly wind,* an astral vessel can sail through a portal into the Material Plane and darken the sky of your game world. For information about astral ships and other githyanki modes of travel, see *Dungeon* #100. More vehicle rules can be found in *Dragon* #294 and the *Arms and Equipment Guide.*

Astral Skiff: Huge vehicle; Profession (sailor) +0; Spd fly 120 ft. (average); Overall AC 3; Section hp 40 (hardness 10); Section AC 3; Ram 4d8; Face 15 ft. by 5 ft.; Height 10 ft.; SA ramming prow; Crew 1 (carries 3); Cargo 1 ton (Spd 100 ft. if 1/2 ton or more).

Astral Brig: Gargantuan vehicle; Profession (sailor) +0; Spd fly 90 ft. (average); Overall AC 1; Section hp 40 (hardness 10); Section AC 3; Ram 8d8; Size 60 ft. by 20 ft.; Height 10 ft.; SA great ballista, ramming prow; Crew 1 (carries 50); cargo 40 tons (Spd 60 ft. if 20 tons or more).

Planar Raider: Colossal vehicle; Profession (sailor) +0; Spd fly 50 ft. (poor); Overall AC -3; Section hp 40 (hardness 10); Section AC 3; Ram 10d10; Size 100 ft. by 30 ft.; Height 15 ft.; SA 10 great ballistae, ramming prow; Crew 1 (carries 125); cargo 150 tons (Spd 30 ft. if 75 tons or more).

Great Ballista: A great ballista is essentially a Colossal heavy crossbow fixed in place. Its size makes it hard for most creatures to aim it, as described under Weapon Size on page 113 of the *Player's Handbook.* Thus, a Medium creature takes a -8 penalty on attack rolls when using a ballista, and a Small creature takes a -10 penalty. Each member of a great ballista's crew (to a maximum of 3) can attempt to aid the operator's ranged attack with a special use of the aid another action, providing a +2 to hit for each crew member who succeeds at a ranged attack roll against AC 10. Fortunately, great ballistae are usually fired at buildings, ships, and other exceedingly large targets. It takes four full-round actions to reload and ready the great ballista after firing due to the complicated system of cranks and winches that enable creatures to cock the powerful weapon. Each full-round task can be done by a different member of the great ballista's crew, allowing it to be reloaded and ready to fire after 1 full round. A great ballista takes up a space 10 feet across.

Cost 1,000 gp; Damage 6d8; Critical (19-20) x2; Range Increment 120 ft.; Typical crew 4.

Spine of Earthly Wind: A Huge air elemental is bound within a column of mithral shaped like a spine that runs from a *control skull* to fuse with the keel of a githyanki astral ship. Astral ships with a *spine of earthly wind* can sail the skies of a Material Plane world. The vessel's fly speed on such a world is equal to its astral speed minus 10 feet, and its maneuverability is reduced by one class (from good to average, average to poor, or poor to clumsy). A *spine of earthly wind* has no effect on any vehicle other than an astral ship.

The *control skull* of an astral ship is shaped like an illithid skull and serves as the focus point for the pilot of the ship. A githyanki touching a *control skull* perceives the world around it as though the ship and its contents are transparent. The githyanki can then mentally control the ship's movement as a full-round action, making Profession (sailor) skill checks as necessary. A non-githyanki suffers 4 negative levels while touching the *control skull,* which disappear after the skull is released, but can attempt to pilot the ship normally. The skull follows the mental commands of the last person to touch it, so control of the ship is maintained by keeping threats from entering the pilot room the *control skull* is typically housed in. A ship without a pilot continues on the course of its last command.

A *spine of earthly wind* or a *control skull* can be damaged by attacks or spells like any magic item. Note that both are composed of mithral; each has a hardness of 15 and 250 hit points for the purposes of causing enough damage to destroy it. Destroying the spine releases the angry elemental to the Material Plane and causes the ship's flight magic to fail, sending it plummeting to the ground. When a *control skull* is destroyed, the astral ship travels at its highest speed in whatever direction the ship is pointing until it collides with an object large enough to stop it or until the ship is sufficiently damaged to destroy it. No method can regain control of the ship, but a *dismissal* spell cast on the spine after the *skull* is destroyed releases the elemental trapped inside to the Elemental Plane of Air and causes the ship to fall.

Strong conjuration; CL 17th; Craft Wondrous Item, *binding, greater planar binding;* Price 140,000 gp.

many of the neighboring realms as possible. To that end, she sends assassins to eliminate the leaders of small and weak kingdoms close to her primary target. Her method of assuming control thereafter might vary depending on the success of those ventures, the nature of the kingdoms, and her specific needs. In one realm, she might rely on the chaos in the wake of the leader's death to make the kingdom an easy target for outright conquest. In another, a magically disguised githyanki spy might assume the role of the dead leader and subtly steer the realm toward policies that favor the lich-queen's success.

If successful, these minor conquests provide the lich-queen with solid bases of operations close to her target and reliable sources of supplies for her subsequent forays. The degree of success she achieves during this pre-invasion period determines the starting point for the main invasion (see below).

Invasion Stage One: Flying Ships, Marching Legions

The githyanki invasion begins in full force when the lich-queen opens her first *gate* between the Astral Plane and the Material Plane. The *gate* appears high in the air, and a fleet of flying astral ships sails through, loaded with githyanki soldiers and weapons of war. Compelled by the ancient pact forged between Gith and Ephelomon, the red dragon consort of Tiamat, red dragons of all ages begin to gather around the githyanki ships, awaiting the commands of their age-old allies. From this point forward, the lich-queen personally directs every stage of the invasion from the relative safety of the Astral Plane, via magical communication with her knight commanders.

Placing the First *Gate*

The spot that the lich-queen chooses for this first *gate* should be near but not within her primary target realm. Her choice of location and her strategy after opening the *gate* depend on how successful her efforts to gain control of neighboring kingdoms have been.

Neighboring Kingdom Controlled: If the lich-queen has already taken control of a neighboring kingdom through a disguised agent, she positions the endpoint of the *gate* within that realm, near its border with her primary target. She marshals whatever resources she can command within the smaller kingdom and sends fleets of astral ships and githyanki knights mounted on dragons to the border. Once the defending forces have massed at the border to meet the invaders, the lich-queen opens a second *gate,* sending legions of githyanki footsoldiers into the heart of the target kingdom. These footsoldiers actually make the first attack, seizing a key strategic location—a critical pass or crossroads, an important fortress, or even the kingdom's capital city. When the defending forces pull back from the border to liberate this vital location, the astral ships and dragon-riding knights begin to advance. As soon as the defenders are within striking distance of the footsoldiers' encampment, the flying githyanki attack the rear of the opposing army, destroying its supply trains in the process. When the defenders turn to meet the flying githyanki, the footsoldiers sortie out from their holding. The two githyanki forces then crush the defending army between their onrushing waves.

Throughout this process, the lich-queen never commits more of her forces than she believes (based on intelligence gathered by her spies) are required to achieve her goals. Huge legions of githyanki soldiers wait in reserve on the Astral Plane until this initial foray has succeeded. If this phase of the invasion goes very poorly, she sends some reinforcements, but she never sends more forces than she must until a githyanki kingdom is established on the world.

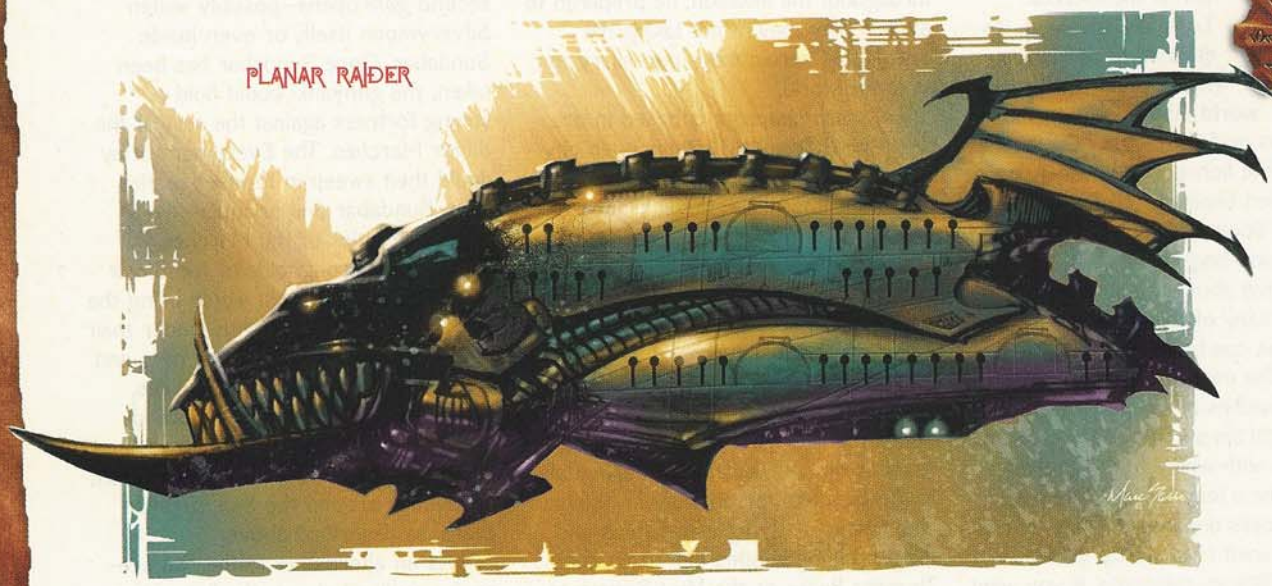
Neighboring Kingdom Destabilized: If the githyanki have successfully destabilized a neighboring kingdom through assassination, the lich-queen opens the first *gate* within that realm and openly seizes control of it. If she can achieve that goal without sending in her footsoldiers, she does so, then follows the strategy described above. If not, she sends her footsoldiers into the destabilized kingdom through the *gate* with orders to eliminate all resistance, then turns the realm into a githyanki state that can serve as her first power base. From there, she makes more cautious forays into neighboring realms, attempting to annex as many smaller, weaker kingdoms as possible before challenging the larger military powers. Only when she is sure that she has a solid base of power does she attack the stronger kingdom that was her original target.

No Neighboring Kingdom Available: If all of her initial forays have failed, the lich-queen chooses a wilderness area near her intended target as the site of the first *gate.* From there, she directs her aerial forces toward her primary target but puts off sending the footsoldiers for as long as possible. If the advance forces of astral ships and dragon-mounted knights can reach her primary target without assistance, she uses the second *gate* to place the footsoldiers directly into the target kingdom as described above. If the advance forces are seriously hindered on their way to the target realm, the lich-queen sends footsoldiers to reinforce them as needed, trying to reserve as many as possible for the surprise internal assault.

Invasion Stage Two: A Power Base

If the attack on her major military target fails, the lich-queen attempts to create a solid base of operations in a neighboring realm, using whichever of the options above best suits the situation. As always, she tries to hold as many footsoldiers as possible in reserve during this period.

Once she has established full control over a sizable realm in the campaign world, she opens a third *gate* and pours her remaining forces into that region. From this new terrestrial githyanki kingdom, christened Krr'a'gith'farak ("the kingdom of Gith on solid ground" in the githyanki tongue), her soldiers strike out across the world to forge a new githyanki empire. Once again, the lich-queen focuses her efforts on the kingdoms with the most military or magical power. Once they're under her control, conquering the rest of the world will be much simpler. While the githyanki armies are extending her reach, the lich-queen's most powerful agents pursue her specific goals, if she has any beyond the conquest of this world. (As noted above, such goals could include locating the divine corpse of the githyanki's former patron, obliterating the purported tomb of Gith, or raiding mind flayer settlements deep underground.)



Weaving the Incursion Into Your Campaign

One way to increase the impact of the githyanki invasion upon your campaign world is to ensure that its repercussions affect people, places, and things with which the PCs are familiar. This technique doesn't necessarily boil down to a "hit them where it hurts" philosophy, although that tactic can be useful in moderation. It's more about weaving a variety of elements from the ongoing campaign into the overarching theme of the invasion.

Reusing elements of your campaign in this way gives players an emotional investment in the invasion that goes a step beyond their concern for the campaign world in which they have been adventuring. Their familiarity with a particular person, place, or item can also give them an edge in a fight that might otherwise prove overwhelming—and in the Incursion campaign, anything that helps the players feel that they are doing well is an invaluable element.

People: The assassination of a beloved or respected NPC, or the death of such an individual on the field of war, is one obvious way to drive the invasion home for the PCs. However, much the same effect can be achieved by having the githyanki take out key villains or rivals. What if the PCs have sworn vengeance on a terrible villain, only to learn that their target died valiantly defending her kingdom from the githyanki? Do the PCs redirect their hatred toward the githyanki who robbed them of their just vengeance? Or do they resurrect the slain villain so they can have a chance to fight her themselves? The emotional impact of such an event can be quite dramatic.

Places: Players often develop similar emotional attachments to places they have visited during their adventuring careers. If they still talk about how they cleared all the undead creatures and deadly traps from the fabled Tomb of Horrors, how would they feel upon learning that the place is now the site of a githyanki outpost? In a similar vein, the githyanki might capture a citadel that the PCs shed much blood defending in years past. In either case, the PCs might actually gain some advantage over the githyanki by virtue of their intimate knowledge of the occupied area.

This tactic provides an excellent excuse for you to build an entirely new adventure around a dungeon map you have used before—even one that your players already have a copy of! Of course, no matter how accurate a map they managed to make the first time through the dungeon, it can't possibly account for the devious modifications the githyanki have made.

Things: You can also tie the invasion to the PCs' past adventures through objects such as magic items or artifacts. Perhaps the characters once undertook a dangerous mission to recover a holy relic for the temple of Heironeous in Verbobonc. Now Verbobonc is occupied by the githyanki, the temple of Heironeous has been burned to the ground, and the fate of that holy relic is anyone's guess. Or perhaps the PCs once discovered a powerful evil artifact. Unable to destroy it, they hid it away as best as they could, fencing it in behind layers of magical wards and placing mighty guardians to watch over it. Now information has reached the party that a team of githyanki adventurers is looking for the item—or perhaps has already found it! In any case, the PCs must fight the githyanki to defend or recover something that matters to them because it is a part of their history.

Incursion into Faerûn

If you are running a campaign in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, you might want to incorporate some or all of the following setting-specific suggestions into the invasion plotline.

- You don't have to kill off Elminster, Khelben, and the Simbul during the early stages of the invasion. After all, the three of them, along with the other very powerful figures of Faerûn, have already recently survived another extraplanar incursion—namely the return of the city of Shade to the desert of Anauroch. But the more of these powerful NPCs that survive, the more difficult it will be for the PCs to take center stage in the campaign, even when they reach high

levels themselves. Logically speaking, it's difficult to rationalize why the fate of the world might hang on the success or failure of a PC mission to slay the lich-queen in the Astral Plane when Elminster could have gone and done it himself as soon as the invasion began.

As noted above, the lich-queen targets as many of these powerful people as she can before launching her invasion. She might try to lure them into her clutches or some deadly trap, or she might simply create a significant distraction with which to divert their attention for a long period. The extent of her success depends entirely on how much you want to shake up your FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign. If you want all those nearly divine NPCs out of the way permanently, grant the lich-queen a near-infallible chance of success in killing them. If you'd like to have most or all of them still around when the invasion is over, imprison or distract them. (Freeing Elminster from his prison cell in the lich-queen's stronghold could be an excellent denouement for the PCs' climactic adventure.) If these powerful NPCs remain in Faerûn throughout the invasion, be prepared to explain why they're not taking the drastic and heroic steps necessary to save the world.

• If your campaign is based in or near the Dalelands, Cormyr is an obvious first target for the githyanki assault. In that case, the lich-queen's assassins target Princess Alusair, her young nephew Azoun V, Caladnei, Overmaster Kendrick of Sembia, and other key figures in the Dalelands, including Storm Silverhand, Randal Morn, Lord Mourngrym, and of course, Elminster. The lich-queen then opens the first *gate* in the southern reaches of the Dalelands (Deepingdale or Arkhendale), or possibly in Sembia. Her forces of flying astral ships and dragon-riding knights can cross the Thunder Peaks or the Vast Swamp to attack Cormyr with relative ease. The second *gate* opens within Suzail once Cormyr's forces have massed along the borders.

From there, the githyanki spread simultaneously in both directions around the Sea of Fallen Stars, into Sembia and the Dragon Coast. Once they conquer the Vilhon Reach, they can expand westward into the relatively wild Western Heartlands, and from there northward to the Silver Marches. From Sembia, their expansion should progress more slowly up through the Dalelands to the Moonsea, then into the Cold Lands and the Unapproachable East.

• If your campaign is based in the North, the Silver Marches can be the lich-queen's first target. The assassins should target Lady Alustriel, Taern Hornblade, Bruenor Battlehammer, Emerus Warcrown, Helm Dwarf-Friend, and Obould Many-Arrows. The first *gate* then opens within the Evermoors and is noticed only by the trolls and other monsters, which quickly begin fleeing the moors and causing trouble in the surrounding lands. The githyanki have a relatively easy time establishing their control over a plot of land on Faerûn that offers no organized resistance, and they press a number of monsters into service as soldiers. When the trolls begin to muster in the northeast part of the moors, with flying ships and wheeling dragons overhead, the armies of Silverymoon and Mithral Hall fortify the banks of the Rauvin. Then the second *gate* opens—possibly within Silverymoon itself, or even inside Sundabar. Once Sundabar has been taken, the githyanki could hold a strong fortress against the rest of the Silver Marches. The Evermoors army could then sweep in to meet sorties from Sundabar and conquer the remaining cities of the Marches.

From the strongholds of the Silver Marches, the githyanki would bring the rest of the North as tightly under their control as possible, subduing orcs and giants as well as humans, dwarves, and elves. Next they would spread down into the Western Heartlands and east to Cormyr, Sembia, the Dalelands, and finally around the Sea of Fallen Stars, as described above.

• As an alternative to the two scenarios outlined above, the lich-queen could choose the Moonsea region as her primary military target, focusing on enemies the PCs probably view as "bad guys." An assault on the Moonsea might not immediately capture the attention of the world's heroes—after all, the elimination of the headquarters of the Zhentarim would do Faerûn a world of good. But once the githyanki kingdom is established and begins to expand southward into the Dalelands, the world would quickly realize that even the scheming Zhents were better than a teeming horde of githyanki bent on world conquest.

In an attack on the Moonsea, the githyanki assassins target Fzoul Chembryl, Manshoon, Scyllua Darkhope, and Selfaril Uoumdolphin of Mulmaster, as well as Randal Morn and the usual suspects in Shadowdale. The lich-queen's agents would stage the assassinations in the Moonsea in such a way as to sow suspicion and conflict among the cities of the region, which are already barely held together in a tenuous alliance. The first gate opens in Daggerdale, then the footsoldiers pour through the second gate into Zhentil Keep.

Once they have taken control of the Moonsea region, the githyanki begin to spread simultaneously in both directions around the Sea of Fallen Stars, first to the Cold Lands and the Dalelands.

• The corpse of the ancient githyanki deity might lie in the Plains of Purple Dust or in the middle of the Great Glacier. The tomb of Gith could stand high in the Spine of the World,

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deep in the Jungles of Chult, or even in the Underdark, far below Menzoberranzan.

Incursion into Oerth

If you are running a campaign in the GREYHAWK setting, the invasion might progress as follows.

The lich-queen's most likely primary target is Furyondy, which is arguably the greatest military power in Greyhawk at present. The proximity of a nation ruled by an evil demigod makes an attack on Furyondy tricky, however. The lich-queen has two clear options. She could open the initial *gate* in the Empire of luz and subdue that realm first, then turn to crush Furyondy and conquer the rest of the Flanaess. Alternatively, she could start in Veluna or the region of Highfolk, build strength for an assault on Furyondy, then move from there to luz's Empire. In large part, this decision rests on the success of the lich-queen's assassins—if they have any luck in weakening luz, his empire becomes their first target. The githyanki spies and assassins will probably have more success making inroads into Veluna, Verbobonc, Dyvers, Highfolk, and Furyondy itself—after all, their rulers are only human.

In this latter scenario, the lich-queen knows that Veluna and Furyondy share good relations and open borders, so she opens the first *gate* into Veluna and waits for Furyondy's forces to march to the aid of their allies. The second *gate* then opens in the heart of Chendl. The lich-queen anticipates that luz will march on Furyondy while it is weak, so she sends guerilla soldiers through another *gate* into the heart of luz's empire so that they can strike at Dorakaa while luz's armies march toward Furyondy. This action does not constitute a full-scale invasion of luz; it is simply a delaying tactic designed to give the lich-queen time to consolidate her power in Furyondy and Veluna before dealing with luz.

Once her kingdom is firmly established between the Vesve Forest and the Nyr Dyv, the lich-queen focuses her attention on luz, leaving the smaller kingdoms and principalities of the southwest for later. After conquering luz, she concentrates on bringing the western lands, from Perrenland and Ket down to the Hold of the Sea Princes, under her sway before turning to the shards of Aerdy in the east.

DUNGEON #100/ POLYHEDRON #159

As mentioned several times in this article, issue #100 of *DUNGEON* and *POLYHEDRON* contains more Incursion content for your campaign.

In the *DUNGEON* section of issue #100, high-level PCs can take the war against the githyanki to the Astral Plane. In a city built on the corpse of a god, countless githyanki and hundreds of red dragons live, serving the whims and will of their leader. PCs must venture there, to the heart of githaynki power, and battle their way to the throne room of Vlaakith the lich-queen. Success in this mega-adventure could end the war, but the price of failure is greater than the fate of the PCs or their world—failure could make the lich-queen into a lich-goddess.

POLYHEDRON presents the flipside of the Incursion and turns the war on its head with the "Knights of the Lich-Queen" D&D Mini-Game. Play hapless or power-hungry githyanki ordered by the lich-queen to invade the Material Plane. Inside the *POLYHEDRON* section, you'll find new githyanki prestige classes, magic items, equipment, feats, mounts, and monsters, as well as cultural information and inspiration for roleplaying githyanki. Whether your PCs are fighting for or against them, the githyanki content in this issue is sure to enhance your game.

This issue includes as its premium a poster map of the city of the lich-queen, Tu'narath, and a "Know Your Foe" poster showing the githyanki in all their evil glory.

THE INCURSION BEGINS

PLAYER CHARACTERS AND THE INVASION

The aforementioned strategies employ pretty basic military concepts, but the options involve a lot of "ifs." How exactly do you as Dungeon Master determine whether the lich-queen's initial forays succeed or not, and thus which strategy she will employ? At least to some extent, you should allow the actions of the player characters, and the degree of success they achieve on their various adventures, to determine how successful the lich-queen is in her assault.

The PCs are the center of your campaign. If that isn't true, it probably should be—the people you sit down and game with every week need to feel that their actions are the most important things happening in the world, or at least that their actions matter. Character actions must make a difference, even if they are peripheral to the Incursion campaign, as they are likely to be when the PCs are relatively low in level. One way to achieve this goal is to think of low-level PCs and their adventures as a microcosm of the defending forces: If they are successful in their smaller missions, then the larger defending forces also enjoy success; if they fail, so do the greater defenders. At higher levels, of course, the PCs' actions can have a more direct bearing on the defense of the world, and their success or failure might literally determine the fate of nations.

The following abstract timeline offers suggestions for adventures and events related to the invasion. These events are keyed not to actual time passing in the game world, but to the levels of the PCs. If you are introducing the invasion into a campaign with medium- or high-level PCs, you can simply ignore the earlier parts of the timeline and thrust the characters into the heart of the action sooner than you otherwise might. This timeline is based on the assumption that while the characters are low in level, the lich-queen's forces are far away from the PCs and therefore have little direct impact on their lives. As they advance to higher levels, the invasion draws inexorably nearer until it surrounds them and sweeps them up in its tide.

Other Ways to Run the War

There are compelling reasons to link the success of the invasion to the PCs' successes against the githyanki, but if that seems too heavy handed or artificial to you, you can decide the success of the invasion in many different ways.

- One option is to set a limit on the size of the githyanki forces. If you decide that there are 90,000 githyanki on the Astral Plane, it's unlikely that even an impressive force like that could hope to dominate the entire world unless it very swiftly subjugates and controls the people and armies of a very powerful nation.

On the other hand, if the number of the githyanki is so great as to seem limitless, the only hope for the world is that someone kills the lich-queen. Thus beheaded, the githyanki have no leaders of a level higher than 16th, a level shy of what is necessary to cast a single gate spell.

- By taking a look at the lich-queen's tactics and the resources of your world, you could decide the whole course of the war. The war can then play out as you designed, affecting the world as you wish, with the PCs taking parts in the epic struggle.
- You could set the course of the war and assign several specific turning points or key events that give the PCs a chance to alter the course of the war in predetermined ways. The PCs might take specific actions to change things or their actions could have unintended effects that set into motion a series of events.

Levels 1 to 3

When the characters are just beginning their careers, the lich-queen's armies are in the initial stages of their invasion. While exploring nearby areas, githyanki scouts based in subterranean hatcheries discover something of interest to the lich-queen—perhaps the fact that this world is the original homeworld of the githyanki's ancestors or some clue to Gith's whereabouts, or some hint as to the location of the long-dead deity of the githyanki.

During this period, the PCs should have only one or two encounters with githyanki—a mere taste of what lies ahead. Such an encounter might involve a small party of low-level githyanki scouts that present a significant challenge for the PCs (EL = average party level + 2 or 3). See the Githyanki Scouting Party sidebar.

Effects on the Invasion: At this stage, the characters can mount no real defense against the githyanki incursion. Their success or failure in their limited encounters with githyanki has no bearing on the invasion's course.

Further Encounters

If the PCs have any other exposure to githyanki this early in the campaign, the contact should be very mysterious. While adventuring underground, for example, they might discover the headless corpse of a mind flayer. Or they might discover gold coins of an unfamiliar mint, each bearing an inscription. With the use of *comprehend languages* or a successful Decipher Script check, the inscription translates as, "Go forth and conquer all." These were the instructions that the red dragon Ephelomon gave to the first Vlaakith when he presented her with the *Scepter of Ephelomon* to seal the githyanki pact with his kind.

Levels 4 to 6

This is the period in which the lich-queen begins her covert operations to subjugate realms close to her target. At this level, the PCs can begin to have encounters that could affect the course of the invasion.

GITHYANKI SCOUTING PARTY (EL 5)

A typical scouting party at this level consists of three githyanki: a 1st-level githwarrior (usually a fighter or ranger), a 1st-level warlock (a sorcerer or wizard), and a 2nd-level gish (multiclass githyanki, usually a Fighter 1/Sorcerer 1).

Githwarrior: Githyanki Fighter 1; CR 2; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 1d10+3; hp 8; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. in breastplate; base 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +5 melee (2d6+3/19-20, masterwork greatsword); Full Atk +5 melee (2d6+3/19-20, masterwork greatsword); SA *psionics;* SQ darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 6; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (weaponsmithing) +2, Intimidate +1, Spot +2; Dodge, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*daze* (DC 9), *mage hand.* Caster level 1st.

Possessions: Breastplate, masterwork greatsword.

Warlock: Githyanki Evoker 1; CR 2; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 1d4+3; hp 5; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +1 melee (1d4/19-20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4/19-20, masterwork dagger); SA *psionics;* SQ darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 6; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Spellcraft +6, Spot +2; Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*daze* (DC 9), *mage hand.* Caster level 1st.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/3; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*acid splash, detect magic, flare, ray of frost;* 1st—*burning hands, mage armor, magic missile.*

Wizard Spellbook (prohibited schools: Abjuration, Enchantment): 0—*acid splash, arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, message, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue;* 1st—*burning hands, mage armor, magic missile.*

Possessions: Masterwork dagger, *wand of magic missile* (caster level 1st).

Gish: Githyanki Ranger 1/Sorcerer 1; CR 3; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 1d8+2 plus 1d4+2; hp 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (2d6+3/19-20, masterwork greatsword); Full Atk +4 melee (2d6+3/19-20, masterwork greatsword); SA *psionics;* SQ darkvision 60 ft., favored enemy (humans +2), spell resistance 7, wild empathy +3; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15.

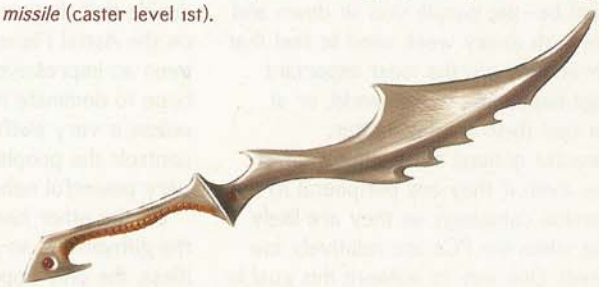
Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Heal +2, Move Silently +6, Search +1, Spot +4, Survival+4; Combat Casting, Track.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*daze* (DC 12), *mage hand.* Caster level 2nd.

Favored Enemy (Ex): The gish gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against humans. He gets the same bonus on weapon damage rolls against creatures of these types.

Sorcerer Spells Known (5/4; save DC 12 + spell level; 10% chance of arcane spell failure): 0—*detect magic, flare, read magic, resistance;* 1st—*ray of enfeeblement, sleep.*

Possessions: Mithral shirt, masterwork greatsword, *wand of magic missile* (caster level 1st).



The Scouting Phase

As time passes in the campaign world and the player characters gain levels, the lich-queen begins planning her assault. Her scouts travel far and wide through your campaign world, looking for key military targets, good staging grounds for attacks, and strategic locations for forts and outposts. They identify the major military powers of the world, identify weaker kingdoms that might be easily seized or destabilized, and survey terrain that the attacking armies can use to their advantage. These scouting groups are stronger and better organized than the ones encountered earlier, and they make every effort to keep the true purpose of their missions secret.

The PCs might encounter such a scouting group in what seems like a random encounter in the wilderness or underground. Later, they might encounter a very similar group, its members disguised as humans, in the middle of a bustling city—possibly the capital of a large and powerful kingdom in your campaign world. Neither scouting group is particularly interested in combat unless its mission is threatened or compromised. See the Githyanki Scout Squad sidebar.

Effects on the Invasion: These encounters give the PCs their first chance to do something that could have a direct impact on the success of the invasion. If they manage to learn from either group that an invasion is brewing (most likely through magical means such as *speak with dead,* rather than more conventional interrogation) and choose to share that information with world leaders, the success of the invasion's next stage might be significantly reduced. Likewise, if the PCs can discover the location of a varsh'isk outpost through similar means, they have the opportunity to destroy it (possibly with military assistance) and thereby hamper further scouting efforts.

GITHYANKI SCOUT SQUAD (EL 8)

A typical scouting group at this level consists of a 6th-level githwarrior sarth (sergeant), a 3rd-level warlock, and four 1st-level warriors (the githyanki detailed in the *Monster Manual*).

Sarth: Githyanki Fighter 6; CR 7; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 6d10+18; hp 51; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. in *+1 full plate armor;* base 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (2d6+7/19-20, *+1 greatsword*); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (2d6+7/19-20, *+1 greatsword*); SA *psionics;* SQ darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 11; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Craft (weaponsmithing) +10, Intimidate +10, Ride +1, Spot +4; Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 11), *dimension door* (DC 15), *mage hand.* Caster level 6th.

Possessions: +1 full plate armor, +1 greatsword.

Warlock: Githyanki Sorcerer 3; CR 4; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 3d4+9; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +0 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA *psionics;* SQ darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 8; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Spellcraft +6; Combat Casting, Dodge.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 12), *mage hand.* Caster level 3rd.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/6; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, flare, light, read magic, touch of fatigue;* 1st—*mage armor, magic missile, shield.*

Possessions: Dagger, *cloak of resistance +1, wand of color spray, potion of barkskin* (+3), *potion of shield of faith* (+2).

GITHYANKI COVERT AGENTS (EL 7 OR 9)

The githyanki spies engaged in a covert action to destabilize a kingdom consist of mostly rogues and rogue/fighters who possess many ranks in Bluff, Disguise, Diplomacy, Forgery, and similar skills. The master spy coordinating several such plots in an area is about an 8th-level rogue, while his lower-level functionaries would include a group of three 3rd-level rogues.

Master Spy: Githyanki Rogue 8; CR 9; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 8d6+8; hp 36; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d6+2/18-20, *+1 rapier*); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+2/18-20, *+1 rapier*); SA *psionics,* sneak attack +4d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, improved uncanny dodge, spell resistance 13, trap sense +2, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +14, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +14, Escape Artist +11, Forgery +13, Gather Information +14, Hide +11, Intimidate +5, Listen +12, Move Silently +11, Spot +12; Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 13), *dimension door* (DC 17), *mage hand.* Caster level 8th.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the master spy takes no damage on a successful saving throw.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): The master spy can't be flanked, except by a rogue of at least 12th level.

Trap Sense (Ex): The master spy gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves against traps and a +2 bonus to AC against attacks by traps.

Trapfinding (Ex): The master spy can use Search to find any trap with a Search DC higher than 20. She can also use Disable Device to disarm magic traps and can bypass a trap without disabling it by beating its Disable Device DC by 10 or more.

Uncanny Dodge: The master spy retains her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class even when flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: +2 studded leather armor, masterwork buckler, *+1 rapier, hat of disguise, potion of gaseous form, potion of pass without trace, 2 potions of cure light wounds.*

Spy Underling: Githyanki Rogue 3; CR 4; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 3d6+3; hp 13; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, masterwork rapier); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, masterwork rapier); SA *psionics,* sneak attack +2d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, spell resistance 8, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +6, Forgery +8, Gather Information +8, Hide +6, Intimidate +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6; Combat Expertise, Improved Feint.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 12), *mage hand.* Caster level 3rd.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the spy underling takes no damage on a successful saving throw.

Trap Sense (Ex): The spy underling gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves against traps and a +1 bonus to AC against attacks by traps.

Trapfinding (Ex): The spy underling can use Search to find any trap with a Search DC higher than 20. The spy underling can also use Disable Device to disarm magic traps and can bypass a trap without disabling it by beating its Disable Device DC by 10 or more.

Uncanny Dodge: The spy underling retains his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class even when flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, masterwork buckler, masterwork rapier, *potion of gaseous form, potion of pass without trace.*

beyond the call of duty—githyanki assassins might target them as well. But the lich-queen does not waste her most powerful agents on these relatively insignificant threats; instead she sends a number of githyanki equal to the number of PCs, each one level lower than the average level of the characters. Assuming a party of four PCs (and thus four githyanki), such an encounter has an EL equal to the average party level +4—a very difficult, possibly overpowering encounter. See the Githyanki Assassin Party sidebar.

Githyanki Destabilization Efforts

In addition to their missions of assassination, the githyanki spies attempt to destabilize the region that the lich-queen has chosen for the invasion. This effort does not involve an overnight coup like the assassinations do; instead the efforts of the lich-queen's agents are geared more toward upsetting the structures that hold societies together. Their wide-ranging missions include discrediting temples with scandals, sowing strife among knightly orders, breeding insubordination in the military, and disrupting commerce by raiding caravans and the like. Such activities might bring the PCs into conflict with either a lone githyanki spy or a team of insurgents. The PCs might investigate a number of different disturbances—such as finding out who framed the high priest of Pelor for a crime and why the Knights of the Dawn have started warring upon each other—only to discover that the same githyanki masterminds are behind them all. See the Githyanki Covert Agents sidebar.

Effects on the Invasion: Assume that the overall githyanki mission is roughly as successful as the specific agents the PCs are dealing with. If the PCs foil all of the githyanki plots and track their origins to a master spy, many such covert actions are dismal failures, not just the ones that the PCs directly oppose. If the PCs manage to break up some plots without tracking down the common threat behind them—clearing the high priest's good name without discovering that the frameup was part of a larger plan, for example—then the githyanki achieve moderate success across the board. If the PCs fail and chaos breaks out in society around them, then that chaos is widespread, and the githyanki win a stunning triumph of wartime espionage.

Invasion Progress

Once you have determined what destruction the githyanki assassins and spies were able to wreak, evaluate the lich-queen's success so far. The extent of the lich-queen's success here determines her exact course of action in the next phase of the invasion.

Does the lich-queen control an entire kingdom? If a country's ruler and all its prominent NPCs are dead, and the lich-queen achieved some success with destabilization, she can now seize control of a country through her agents.

Did she successfully destabilize a kingdom? A successful assassination might accomplish this result by itself, depending on the kingdom. Otherwise, evaluate any targeted attempts at destabilization based on PC success, as above.

On the March

Levels 7 to 9

The PCs can have their hands full at this stage if they take on too great a responsibility. There is a wide variety of adventure possibilities and no shortage of opponents.

With the initial stages of the invasion complete, the lich-queen now opens her first *gate* from the Astral Plane to the Material Plane and sends through a number of astral ships to begin the assault in earnest. As described above, the entry point for these ships depends on what success the lich-queen has enjoyed so far.

Neighboring Kingdom Controlled: If the lich-queen has a kingdom at her command, a 16th-level githyanki knight assumes the throne as supreme leader in her name. All the resources of that kingdom are marshaled for the war effort, and the astral ships appear within the captured realm's borders. The knight, supported by the troops on the ships, enforces strict discipline on the troops of the captured kingdom and its populace, ruling with an iron hand and tolerating no dissent or resistance. Military forts are built within the conquered kingdom, solidifying githyanki control. When order is firmly established, the astral ships lead the landbound troops of the conquered kingdom in a march to their next target.

Neighboring Kingdom Destabilized: If the lich-queen managed only to destabilize a kingdom, her next task is to bring it firmly under her control. The astral ships appear within the destabilized realm, and the troops onboard quickly bring order to the realm's political chaos, enforcing the lich-queen's law through a powerful (16th-level) githyanki knight. Once control is established, the knight proceeds as described above, marshaling the native forces for a march on the next target.

No Neighboring Kingdom Available: If the covert operations failed to pave the way for the lich-queen to usurp control of a kingdom, the astral ships instead appear in a relatively wild and unsettled area close to her main military target. From there, the githyanki armies fly toward their target's borders, crushing any resistance in their way.

The PCs as Scouts

One of the most useful things the characters can do in this phase is serve as scouts. Realms at all removed from the point where the astral ships arrived have no knowledge of the size or scope of the githyanki incursion, so the most valuable pieces of information that PCs can provide are approximate troop numbers and special fighting capabilities. The nature of the flying astral ships and the presence of dragons, both of which provide the githyanki with fantastic mobility, are perhaps the most crucial pieces of information.

At this level, PCs should begin to fight githyanki on a regular basis. One key to keeping such battles from becoming monotonous is to vary the size and composition of the githyanki forces the PCs encounter. In the course of their reconnaissance, the PCs should certainly encounter small groups of githyanki scouts, squadrons of low-level soldiers, and the occasional patrolling knight.

Vary the encounter level as well, including some easy encounters with groups of 1st-level warriors (the githyanki straight out of the *Monster Manual*) as well as a few encounters the PCs will find overwhelming. For a moderately challenging encounter, use the same group of githyanki scouts described above: a 6th-level githwarrior sarth (sergeant), a 3rd-level warlock, and four 1st-level warriors (EL 8). For easier encounters, use larger bands of 1st-level warriors: five or six of them for an EL of 5, seven to nine for EL 6, or ten to twelve for EL 7.

Effects on the Invasion: Unfortunately for the defenders of the world, any successes the PCs enjoy on these missions actually help the lich-queen's goals. If her target kingdom receives a warning that armies are massing on its borders, its leaders will send their own troops to the borders to meet them, leaving the interior vulnerable to the githyanki footsoldiers who will arrive through the second *gate*.

Only if the PCs manage to extract much more significant information about the lich-queen's plans (possible only if they magically pry such knowledge from the mind of a knight) can they bring a truly useful warning to a defending kingdom. Even without such information, however, if the PCs defeat the githyanki they encounter during this stage of the campaign, then the armies defending the target kingdom should likewise be strong. The leaders might still fall into the lich-queen's trap, but the troops will fight hard and well in their kingdom's defense.

The PCs as Organizers

The characters could also try to work inside a conquered or destabilized kingdom to organize opposition to the githyanki forces. In such a scenario, the focus is on politics and diplomacy (not negotiating with the githyanki, but garnering support among the populace), rather than on combat with githyanki. If the kingdom's ruler has been assassinated, finding a new one can be the characters' central task. A lost heir, a popular general, a reluctant adventurer, or even a PC could gather enough support to successfully oppose the githyanki knight's claim to the throne.

GITHYANKI MOUNTED KNIGHT (EL 12)

A very challenging encounter for PCs at this level is a githyanki knight (blackguard) mounted on a juvenile red dragon.

Knight: Githyanki Fighter 7/Blackguard 2; CR 10; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 7d10+21 plus 2d10+6; hp 76; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. in *+2 full plate armor;* base 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (2d6+7/19-20, *+1 silver sword*); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (2d6+7/19-20, *+1 silver sword*); SA poison use, *psionics,* smite good 1/day; SQ aura of evil, dark blessing, darkvision 60 ft., *detect good,* spell resistance 14; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Hide +0, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (religion) +2, Ride +4; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (silver sword), Improved Sunder, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Weapon Focus (silver sword), Weapon Specialization (silver sword).

Poison Use (Ex): The knight can use poison with no risk of poisoning himself.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 12), *dimension door* (DC 16), *mage hand, telekinesis* (DC 17); 1/day—*plane shift* (DC 19). Caster level 9th.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, the knight may attempt to smite good with one normal melee attack. He adds +2 to his attack roll and deals 2 extra points of damage. If he accidentally smites a creature that is not good, the smite has no effect but is still used up for that day.

Aura of Evil (Su): The knight's aura of evil is moderate in strength (2).

Dark Blessing (Su): The knight gains a bonus on all saving throws equal to his Charisma modifier (already figured into the statistics above).

Detect Good (Sp): The knight can use *detect good,* as the spell, at will.

Possessions: +2 full plate armor, +1 silver sword, ring of protection +1.

Dragon Mount: Juvenile red dragon; CR 10; Large dragon (fire); HD 16d12+64; hp 168; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +16; Grp +29; Atk +24 melee (2d6+9, bite); Full Atk +24 melee (2d6+9, bite) and +19 melee (1d8+4, 2 claws) and +19 melee (1d6+4, 2 wings) and +19 melee (1d8+13, tail slap); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (40-ft. cone of fire), spells; SQ darkvision 400 ft., fire subtype, immunities (fire, paralysis, *sleep*), keen senses, *locate object,* scent; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +12; Str 29, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +23, Diplomacy +23, Hide -4, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (the planes) +21, Listen +21, Search +21, Sense Motive +21, Spot +21; Blind-Fight, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, the dragon can breathe a 40-foot cone of fire. Every creature in the area takes 8d10 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 22 half).

Spells: The dragon casts spells as a 3rd-level sorcerer.

Fire Subtype: The dragon is immune to fire damage but takes double damage from cold unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed. In that case, he takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Keen Senses (Ex): The dragon sees four times as well as humans in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Locate Object (Sp): Four times per day, the dragon can use *locate object,* as the spell of the same name.

Scent (Ex): The dragon can detect opponents within 30 feet. Exact location is not revealed, unless the creature is within 5 feet.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/6; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, flare, light, read magic, touch of fatigue;* 1st—*mage armor, magic missile, shield.*

GITHYANKI PLANAR RAIDER (EL 17)

The typical crew for a planar raider consists of 120 1st-level githyanki warriors (as detailed in the *Monster Manual*) and four sarths (sergeants), such as the 6th-level fighter described earlier. A single kith'rak (captain) of 12th to 14th level commands the ship.

Planar Raider: Colossal Vehicle; Profession (sailor) +0; Spd fly 50 ft. (poor); Overall AC -3; Section hp 40 (hardness 10); Section AC 3; Ram 10d10; Size 100 ft. by 30 ft.; Height 15 ft.; SA 10 great ballistae, ramming prow; Crew 1 (carries 125); cargo 150 tons (Spd 30 ft. if 75 tons or more).

Kith'rak: Githyanki Fighter 12; CR 13; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 12d10+36; hp 102; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. in *+2 full plate armor;* base 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +12; Grp +17; Atk +18 melee (1d8+10 plus 1d6 fire/19-20, *+1 flaming two-bladed sword*); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+10 plus 1d6 fire/19-20, *+1 flaming two-bladed sword*) and +18 melee (1d8+7 plus 1d6 electricity/19-20, *+1 shock two-bladed sword*); SA *psionics;* SQ darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 17; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Jump +16, Profession (sailor) +7; Cleave, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (two-bladed sword), Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (two-bladed sword), Greater Weapon Specialization (two-bladed sword), Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (two-bladed sword), Weapon Specialization (two-bladed sword).

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 10), *dimension door* (DC 14), *mage hand, telekinesis* (DC 15); 1/day—*plane shift* (DC 17). Caster level 12th.

Possessions: +2 full plate armor, +1 flaming/+1 shock two-bladed sword, gauntlets of ogre power +2, potion of fly.

While combat with githyanki is a less central activity in this scenario, destroying a flying ship would be a tremendous symbolic victory, since it would clearly demonstrate to the beleaguered populace that a githyanki victory is far from inevitable. Most of the githyanki the PCs encounter in this scenario should be covert agents as described below—one or two 8th-level rogue master spies (EL 9 for one or 11 for two), or four to six 3rd-level rogue spies (EL 8 to 9).

Effects on the Invasion: If the PCs are very successful in their efforts, they can prevent the githyanki from taking control of the destabilized kingdom, or at least severely hinder that effort and thwart later plans. If they can place a popular, powerful, and charismatic figure on the throne and rally the kingdom's army to the new ruler's cause, then the lich-queen will be forced to open the second *gate* inside this kingdom to establish control, rather than using it to trap the defending forces of the target realm. Unless the PCs have been astonishingly successful, the footsoldiers who march through this second *gate* are sufficient to guarantee the githyanki control of this kingdom, but the assault on the target kingdom becomes much more difficult, or perhaps even infeasible. If the PCs have succeeded beyond anyone's expectations, the rallied army can drive the githyanki out of this kingdom entirely, forcing them to consolidate their power elsewhere.

OTHER INCURSION RESOURCES

In addition to Dungeon #100, there are many resources that can enhance your Incursion campaign.

Manual of the Planes: This book is a must-have if your players want to adventure extensively on other planes. New feats, spells, and prestige classes presented in this book could prove invaluable in their struggles against the invasion.

Psionics Handbook: If you play with psionics, you already know how you'll use this book to handle the githyanki, but if you don't use psionics, you might consider using the githyanki presented in this book and the "psionics and spells are different" rule to make githyanki more alien and unpredictable.

Arms and Equipment Guide: This book contains the vehicle rules that will help you run a game with flying ships, but it also gives statistics for flying ships and soldiers the nations of your world might muster to face the githyanki threat.

Book of Vile Darkness: To make the githyanki threat truly terrifying, you might employ many of the rules from the *Book of Vile Darkness.*

"Killing Cousins," Dragon #306: This article details the hit squads githzerai send against githyanki. It features a new monster, new feats, and new magic items.

"Crusades of the Ashen Compact," Dragon #298: In this article, a secret alliance of derro, duergar, mind flayers, and aboleth combine efforts to train surface dwellers and send them against the drow. The hyper-intelligent mind flayers could turn this war machine against the githyanki. The Ashen Compact might even be the way that the illithids and other strange creatures of the Underdark ally themselves with surface dwellers.

"Calm Amid the Storm," Dragon #281: This article features githzerai prestige classes useful for creating NPC allies of the PCs but also useful to offer to the players as the secrets githzerai share with them to aid the war effort.

"Map of Mystery: Githzerai Monastery," Dungeon #99: This issue presents a map of a githzerai monastery. The PCs could venture there to broker an alliance with the githzerai, or perhaps the githyanki take over the Material Plane monastery as one of their first attacks on the world, and the PCs must battle them amid the ruins of the previous combat.

"Critical Threats: Yu'thiol Mansecho," Dungeon #95: This "Critical Threats" presents a githyanki spymaster NPC, perfect for inclusion in Incursion as the first hint of the coming invasion.

"Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai," Dungeon #92: This adventure to the astral stronghold of a powerful githyanki wizard could serve as a prelude to an attack on the lich-queen. The wizard is a 17th-level character hoping to avoid the lich-queen's notice. The PCs might venture to meet this character in the hopes of making him the leader of a rebellion against the lich-queen's rule.

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The PCs as Protectors of Civilization

Should the githyanki end up without a kingdom for a base, the second *gate* is opened in the wilderness. The appearance of the githyanki ships in such a location can actually have surprising consequences. As monsters flee from the large military force that has suddenly appeared in the midst of their terrain, they displace other creatures from the surrounding areas, which in turn flee into civilized areas and cause trouble. The PCs might be called upon to repel "an invasion of monsters"—perhaps orcs or lizardfolk. Such an invasion is, of course, on a much smaller scale than the real invasion, which might not yet be obvious to the PCs.

If the PCs have not yet discovered the magnitude of the githyanki threat, such a scenario allows them to gain essential information for the defense of the nearby kingdoms. If they repel the displaced monster "invaders" and determine the cause of the assault, they can follow the displacements of those and other creatures back to the githyanki. Once the PCs reach the area where the armies are active, they might encounter a variety of githyanki groups similar to those mentioned earlier in this section: a group of scouts (EL 8), a lower-level group of 1st-level warriors, or a knight mounted on a dragon.

Effects on the Invasion: If the PCs carry word of the advancing githyanki armies back to civilization, they might be able to help create a coalition of kingdoms that can work together to stop the progress of the invaders. The best tactic for the defenders of the planet would be to muster a large force to meet the githyanki before the latter can reach the borders of any kingdom. If they do so, the lich-queen must modify her plans. She opens the second *gate* at the site of this great battle, trapping the defending armies between her astral ships and dragons and the footsoldiers who pour through the second *gate* from the Astral Plane. Assuming that no member nation of this impromptu coalition sent its entire standing army to a battle far from its borders, the destruction of the allied army leaves no realm undefended. A significant force still waits to meet the marching githyanki upon their arrival at the borders of the target nation, and the odds of that nation emerging victorious are better now that the lich-queen's trump card (the soldiers waiting on the Astral Plane) has already been played.

Levels 10 to 12

By the time the characters reach this level, the githyanki incursion is in full swing. Some of the lich-queen's forces—those aboard the flying astral ships—have already been deployed, and the rest are due to arrive soon. Depending on prior events, the githyanki might already rule a small terrestrial kingdom—either because the lich-queen's initial covert operations were a smashing success, or because her initial ploys destabilized the area and subsequent PC efforts to rally opposition failed. If this is the case, the githyanki are using the controlled kingdom as a staging ground for their march on a larger kingdom nearby. Otherwise, their armies are on the march along a wilderness path, with astral ships and red dragons circling overhead.

If the lich-queen controls a small kingdom, then her aim is to marshal its remaining soldiers, join them with her aerial forces, and mass them at the border of her target kingdom. Otherwise, she simply tries to get her astral ships and dragons to the target country's border unhindered. Ideally, such a march should draw the defending forces to the border, enabling a second wave of soldiers (who arrive through a second *gate* in the midst of the kingdom) to seize a key strategic point—possibly even the kingdom's capital—with little resistance. If the PCs learned of this plan earlier (perhaps by magically extracting it from the mind of a githyanki knight, alive or dead) and warned the defending kingdom, this plan is thwarted and the defenders have a much better chance of success. It is also possible that the lich-queen was forced to play this card earlier, either to help consolidate her control of a smaller kingdom or to overcome a coalition army on her way to the target country.

Even if the lich-queen's trap has been successfully laid, there is still hope that the PCs can bring deliverance to the

defenders. The characters might swoop in on a pirated astral ship behind the ships of the githyanki, causing enough of a distraction that the defenders can escape the viselike trap. Alternatively, they might convince some gold dragons to aid them and lead a flight of the creatures to battle the githyanki on their red dragons, with the same overall effect. The adventure possibilities for characters at this level are exciting and could involve intense diplomacy to garner support for the defenders (from neutral kingdoms and fantastic monsters alike), fierce combat with githyanki knights (or even the entire crew of a small astral ship), rousing citizens to rebel against the githyanki occupation of their capital city (or some other key strategic point), leading small armies of their own onto the battlefield, and scouting or espionage missions into the heart of enemy territory. All of these options involve important and dangerous tasks befitting characters of this level. The PCs might venture to the front lines to rescue prisoners of war, or they might become prisoners themselves and have to find a means of escape. Inspiration abounds in war movies (from *The Bridge on the River Kwai* to *Saving Private Ryan*), and the PCs should have a chance at this stage

GITHYANKI OPPONENTS (EL 8 TO 14)

The following list details groups of githyanki that can provide an appropriate challenge for characters of this level. Statistics for creatures and NPCs not previously described are given thereafter.

EL 8: Squad consisting of a sarth (githyanki Fighter 6), a warlock (githyanki Sorcerer 3), and six githwarriors (githyanki Warrior 1).

EL 9: Squad consisting of a sarth (githyanki Fighter 6), a warlock (githyanki Necromancer 6), and six githwarriors (githyanki Warrior 1).

EL 10: Elite squad consisting of a gish (githyanki Fighter 2/Sorcerer 2) and six elite githwarriors (githyanki Fighter 3).

EL 11: Knight (githyanki Fighter 7/Blackguard 2) mounted on a half-red-dragon/half-megaraptor.

EL 12: Knight (githyanki Fighter 7/Blackguard 2) mounted on a juvenile red dragon or a cauchemar (see the *Monster Manual*).

EL 13: Infiltration squad consisting of a gish'sarath (githyanki Ranger 5/Sorcerer 5), a master spy (githyanki Rogue 8), and six elite githwarriors (githyanki Fighter 3).

EL 14: Small company consisting of a kith'rak (githyanki Fighter 12), three sarths (githyanki Fighter 6), and twelve githwarriors (githyanki Warrior 1).

Warlock: Githyanki Necromancer 6; CR 7; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 6d4+12; hp 27; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d4-1/19-20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4-1/19-20, masterwork dagger); SA *psionics;* SQ darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 11; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Decipher Script +6, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Spellcraft +14; Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Still Spell.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 10), *dimension door* (DC 14), *mage hand.* Caster level 6th.

Wizard Spells Prepared (5/5/5/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*acid splash, detect magic, flare, read magic, touch of fatigue;* 1st—*expeditious retreat, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield, silent image;* 2nd—*darkness, false life, scare, scorching ray, see invisibility;* 3rd—*dispel magic, haste, lightning bolt, ray of exhaustion.*

Wizard Spellbook (prohibited schools: Conjuration, Enchantment): 0—*acid splash, arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, light, mage hand, mending, message, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue;* 1st—*burning hands, cause fear, chill touch, expeditious retreat, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield, silent image, true strike;* 2nd—*blur, darkness, false life, gust of wind, invisibility, scare, scorching ray, see invisibility, shatter;* 3rd—*dispel magic, haste, lightning bolt, magic circle against good, protection from energy, ray of exhaustion, vampiric touch.*

Possessions: Masterwork dagger, *pearl of power* (1st-level spell), *ring of protection +1.*

Hanathka'duth Steed: Half-red-dragon/half-megaraptor; CR 8; Huge dragon (augmented animal); HD 8d10+51; hp 95; Init +2; Spd 60 ft., fly 120 ft. (average); AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +23; Atk +13 melee (2d8+9, talons); Full Atk +13 melee (2d8+9, talons) and +8 melee (1d4+4, 2 foreclaws) and +8 melee (2d6+4, bite); Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft.; SA breath weapon (30-ft. cone of fire); SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunities (fire, paralysis, *sleep*), low-light vision, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 29, Dex 15, Con 23, Int 4, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Hide +11, Jump +23, Listen +16, Spot +16, Survival+16; Run, Toughness, Track.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once per day, the Hanathka'duth steed can breathe a 30-foot cone of fire. Every creature in this area takes 6d8 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 20 half).

Scent (Ex): The Hanathka'duth steed can detect opponents within 30 feet. Exact location is not revealed, unless the creature is within 5 feet.

Gish'sarath: Male githyanki Ranger 5/Sorcerer 5; CR 11; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 5d8+10 plus 5d4+10; hp 54; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (2d6+3/19-20, masterwork greatsword); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (2d6+3/19-20, masterwork greatsword) or +13/+8 ranged (1d8+4/x3, *+2 composite longbow* [+2 Str bonus]); SA *psionics;* SQ animal companion, combat style (archery), darkvision 60 ft., favored enemies (humans +4, elves +2); spell resistance 15, wild empathy +8; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +15, Heal +6, Move Silently +11, Search +1, Spot +8, Survival +8; Combat Casting, Endurance, Leadership, Point Blank Shot, Track, Weapon Focus (composite longbow).

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 13), *dimension door* (DC 17), *mage hand, telekinesis* (DC 18); 1/day—*plane shift* (DC 20). Caster level 10th.

Favored Enemy (Ex): The gish gains a +4 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against humans, and a +2 bonus when using them against elves. He gets the same bonuses on weapon damage rolls against creatures of these types.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/5; save DC 13 + spell level; 10% chance of spell failure): 0—*acid splash, arcane mark, detect magic, flare, read magic, touch of fatigue;* 1st—*burning hands, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, sleep;* 2nd—*invisibility, scorching ray.*

Possessions: *+2 mithral shirt,* masterwork greatsword, *+2 composite longbow* (+2 Str bonus), *quiver of Ehlonna,* 20 arrows, 20 silver arrows, 20 adamantine arrows.

to experience the horror of war firsthand.

Effects on the Invasion: Weigh the success of all the PCs' activities up to this point when deciding the fate of the defending army. If it is trapped between the two githyanki forces, but the PCs have triumphed even over large and powerful groups of githyanki that clearly outstripped them in power, then the defenders might likewise triumph—particularly if, at a crucial juncture, the PCs do something truly heroic to save the day. If the PCs can prevent the jaws of the trap from closing, the defenders have better odds—in fact, they might prove victorious even if the characters have had only moderate success in their adventures to date. If the PCs have failed in multiple important missions, however, the defending soldiers—and the kingdom they seek to protect—are doomed.

Great resourcefulness and phenomenal success on the part of the PCs before this stage of the invasion might mean that the lich-queen cannot mount her assault on the target kingdom yet. If the githyanki suffered great losses in their attempt to take control of a smaller kingdom, they must bring in reinforcements before they can attack their primary target, so they will wait a while and rebuild their strength before striking. Similarly, devastating losses taken in battle with a coalition army on the way to the target kingdom might prevent a strike and force the githyanki to find another location at which to consolidate their power.

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THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Levels 13 to 15

As the PCs approach the height of their power, they can play increasingly significant roles in the war effort against the githyanki. By this time, the lich-queen should have established some sort of stable power base—if not in the militarily powerful kingdom she had originally targeted, then in a nearby realm from which she can easily stage assaults against the primary target. Whatever its location, the lich-queen names her new Material Plane kingdom Krr'a'gith'farak.

Once Krr'a'gith'farak has been established, the lich-queen reveals the mighty resources at her disposal by opening a third and final *gate,* through which huge numbers of githyanki soldiers from the Astral Plane pour into the border areas of the kingdom. A brief pause in the lich-queen's agenda of conquest then ensues while the githyanki consolidate their power in the new realm, adapt to life on the Material Plane, and suppress any rebellious sentiment among the people they have conquered. As soon as their control over Krr'a'gith'farak is complete, the incursion resumes.

Within Krr'a'gith'farak, the githyanki work to shore up their defenses and prepare for further military action. Forts spring up throughout the kingdom, particularly along the borders. The githyanki also build an extensive subterranean hatchery, larger than any they have previously built on any Material Plane world, and start breeding the next generation of githyanki soldiers.

Meanwhile, the conquered people remain in their towns and villages, where they work to provide food for themselves and their new githyanki masters. (All too often, the weak among them *become* food for the flesh-eating conquerors.) Old cities are razed, along with temples and any other sites that might eventually serve as rallying points for a rebellious movement. Githyanki soldiers and covert agents monitor the conquered people closely to ensure compliance with the new order.

Outside of Krr'a'gith'farak, githyanki spies and soldiers continue to advance the lich-queen's mission of conquest. Master spies shrouded in layers of magical and mundane disguise work among the natives of every nearby kingdom and region, ferreting out secrets and undermining defensive preparations. Armies large and small march to nearby locations while astral ships fly to more distant ones, bringing more territory into the githyanki empire.

Adventure possibilities during this period are many and varied. As they have done at lower levels, the PCs can continue to scout, spy on githyanki operations, raid smaller strongholds, and organize resistance to the githyanki conquest. With power at their disposal that approaches that of the most powerful githyanki agents, the PCs can now hope to deal the enemies a blow severe enough to hinder their efforts at conquest. Whichever scenarios you choose, construct the encounters so that they present an appropriate level of challenge for the PCs while reflecting the relative strength of the githyanki forces based on events to date. If the githyanki are strong overall, make sure the PCs face very challenging encounters.

The PCs as a Guerilla Force

Within Krr'a'gith'farak, the characters could stage guerilla attacks against a githyanki fort, harassing its troops and wearing them down over time. The defenders of such a fort should be powerful enough that, if given the chance to organize a coordinated defense, they would be capable of overwhelming the PCs.

The characters' best approach in such a scenario is to strike quickly, inflict as much harm as possible, then withdraw before reinforcements arrive. Alternatively, the characters might seize control of a small, defensible portion of the fort, then gradually work outward from there until the entire fort falls into their hands.

Effects on the Invasion: Repeated guerilla tactics could significantly hamper the githyanki's ability to hold their fort and divert small groups of reinforcements from other areas where they could be advancing the lich-queen's agenda of conquest. More importantly, though, the PCs' success at destabilizing a githyanki fort could inspire hope in the downtrodden populace and provide the impetus needed to organize a full-scale revolt.

The PCs as Counterspies

PCs based outside Krr'a'gith'farak could function as counterespionage agents in the service of a nearby kingdom. Charged with the task of discovering and eliminating githyanki spies within that realm—or perhaps even throughout the region—they must maneuver through twisted webs of intrigue in pursuit of their quarry. Their investigations could unmask traitors within their own kingdom as well as githyanki spies, potentially undermining the lich-queen's entire network of informers and lackeys in the area.

Discovering the spies is, of course, only the beginning of the PCs' task. Once they have identified the culprits, they must determine how much information the spies have already passed on and how much damage the traitors have done. Assessing the damage might involve intentionally passing misinformation to githyanki spies or otherwise using deception to mislead enemy informers and scouts.

Effects on the Invasion: Success at this sort of venture could result in a decisive military victory for the characters' kingdom, especially if the PCs manage to plant false information with the githyanki spies. Exposure of spies and informers might cause the lich-queen to delay moving against the PCs' realm until she can reestablish her information network. If the PCs fail in such a mission, they might be

framed as githyanki spies themselves.

The PCs as Army Commanders

PCs who want more prominent roles in the action could lead a force of war into battle with the githyanki armies. There are two basic ways to approach such a scenario. The more complicated way is to play out the battle using miniatures and a mass-combat rules system (such as the one presented in the forthcoming *Miniatures Handbook*). The simpler way is to let the battle rage in the background, as a sort of backdrop for the PCs' actions.

Miniatures Battle: The githyanki army is made up of small squads, each consisting of three to five githwarriors (usually warriors or fighters, but occasionally barbarians, rangers, or rogues), one warlock (a wizard, sorcerer, or psion of 1st to 6th level), possibly a gish (multiclass githwarrior/warlock), and a sarth (sergeant) of 6th to 11th level. A kith'rak (12th- to 16th-level githwarrior captain) commands four to six of these squads with the assistance of a 7th- to 12th-level warlock kajorr (master). A githyanki army consists of a number of kith'raks and their assembled forces, commanded by several high-level and high-ranking kith'raks (15th-16th level). Set

GITHYANKI FORT

A githyanki fort within Krr'a'gith'farak is defended by approximately one hundred githyanki, including twenty sarths (sergeants) of 6th to 11th level, five kith'raks (captains) of 12th to 14th level, and a single knight (fighter/blackguard) of 14th or 15th level. An adult red dragon (the knight's steed) also helps to guard the outpost. As a 14th-level character (and thus a 14th-level caster for the purpose of her psionic abilities), this githyanki knight can bring her Huge dragon mount along when she uses her *dimension door* ability.

Knight: Githyanki Fighter 7/Blackguard 7; CR 15; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 7d10+21 plus 7d10+21; hp 119; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. in *+3 full plate armor;* base 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +14; Grp +17; Atk +19 melee (2d6+7/19-20, *+1 unholy silver sword*); Full Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (2d6+7/19-20, *+1 unholy silver sword*); SA command undead 5/day, poison use, *psionics,* smite good 2/day, sneak attack +2d6; SQ aura of despair, aura of evil, dark blessing, darkvision 60 ft., *detect good,* spell resistance 19; AL NE; SV Fort +15, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Hide +0, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (religion) +2, Ride +4; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (silver sword), Improved Sunder, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Weapon Focus (silver sword), Weapon Specialization (silver sword).

Command Undead (Su): The knight can rebuke or command undead as a 5th-level evil cleric.

Poison Use (Ex): The knight can use poison with no risk of poisoning herself.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 12), *dimension door* (DC 16), *mage hand, telekinesis* (DC 17); 1/day—*plane shift* (DC 19). Caster level 14th.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, the knight may attempt to smite good with one normal melee attack. She adds +2 to her attack roll and deals 7 extra points of damage. If she accidentally smites a creature that is not good, the smite has no effect but is still used up for that day.

Aura of Despair (Su): Every enemy within 10 feet of a knight takes a -2 morale penalty on all saving throws.

Aura of Evil (Su): The knight's aura of evil is strong (7).

Dark Blessing (Su): The knight gains a bonus on all saving throws equal to her Charisma modifier (already figured into the statistics above).

Detect Good (Sp): The knight can use *detect good,* as the spell, at will.

Possessions: +3 full plate armor, +1 unholy silver sword, ring of protection +1.

Dragon Mount: Adult red dragon; CR 15; Huge dragon (fire); HD 22d12+110; hp 253; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 29, touch 8, flat-footed 29; Base Atk +22; Grp +41; Atk +31 melee (2d8+11, bite); Full Atk +31 melee (2d8+11, bite) and +26 melee (2d6+5, 2 claws) and +26 melee (1d8+5, 2 wings) and +26 melee (2d6+16, tail slap); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA breath weapon (50-ft. cone of fire), crush, frightful presence, spells; SQ darkvision 600 ft., damage resistance 5/magic, fire subtype, immunities (fire, paralysis, *sleep*), keen senses, *locate object,* spell resistance 21; scent; AL CE; SV Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +17; Str 33, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 19, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +30, Diplomacy +32, Hide -8, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (the planes) +28, Listen +29, Search +28, Sense Motive +29, Spellcraft +7, Spot +29; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, the dragon can breathe a 50-foot cone of fire. Every creature in the area takes 12d10 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 26 half).

Crush (Ex): When flying or jumping, the dragon can land on opponents as a standard action, using her whole body to crush them. A crush attack is effective only against Small or smaller opponents, although the dragon mount can attempt normal overrun or grapple attacks against larger opponents. A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under the dragon's body. Each creature in the affected area must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 26) or be pinned, automatically taking 2d8+16 points of bludgeoning damage that round and each subsequent round that the pin is maintained. If the dragon chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack.

Frightful Presence (Ex): When the dragon charges or attacks, she inspires terror in every creature within 180 feet that has 21 or fewer Hit Dice or levels. A potentially affected creature that succeeds at a Will save (DC 24) remains immune to that dragon mount's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, a creature with 4 or fewer HD becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds and one with 5 or more HD becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds. The dragon mount ignores the frightful presence of other dragons.

Spells: The dragon mount casts spells as a 7th-level sorcerer.

Fire Subtype: The dragon is immune to fire damage but takes double damage from cold unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed. In that case, she takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Keen Senses (Ex): The dragon sees four times as well as humans in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Locate Object (Sp): Four times per day, the dragon can use *locate object,* as the spell of the same name.

Scent (Ex): The dragon can detect opponents within 30 feet. Exact location is not revealed, unless the creature is within 5 feet.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/5; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*acid splash, detect magic, flare, light, mage hand, read magic, touch of fatigue;* 1st—*burning hands, mage armor, magic missile, shield, sleep;* 2nd—*flaming sphere, protection from energy, scorching ray;* 3rd—*fireball, haste.*

GITHYANKI SPY NETWORK

The spies at work in this stage of the invasion are true masters of their art. Most are rogues of 13th to 16th level, and some might also have the ninja spy prestige class detailed in *Oriental Adventures.*

Master Spy: Githyanki Rogue 13; CR 14; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 13d6+13; hp 58; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +9; Grp +9; Atk +12 melee (1d6+3/18-20, *+3 rapier*); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6+3/18-20, *+3 rapier*); SA *psionics,* sneak attack +7d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., improved evasion, improved uncanny dodge, slippery mind, SR 18, trap sense +4, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +19, Diplomacy +21, Disguise +21, Escape Artist +17, Forgery +20, Gather Information +19, Hide +17, Intimidate +5, Listen +17, Move Silently +17, Spot +17, Tumble +11; Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 13), *dimension door* (DC 17), *mage hand, telekinesis* (DC 18); 1/day—*plane shift.* (DC 20). Caster level 13th.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): The master spy can't be flanked, except by a rogue of at least 17th level.

Slippery Mind (Ex): The master spy can attempt a second saving throw 1 round after failing a save against an enchantment spell or effect.

Trap Sense (Ex): The master spy gains a +4 bonus on Reflex saves against traps and a +4 bonus to AC against attacks by traps.

Trapfinding (Ex): The master spy can use Search to find any trap with a Search DC higher than 20. She can also use Disable Device to disarm magic traps and can bypass a trap without disabling it by beating its Disable Device DC by 10 or more.

Uncanny Dodge: The master spy retains her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class even when flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Possessions: +3 studded leather armor, +2 buckler, +3 rapier, hat of disguise, potion of gaseous form, 2 potions of pass without trace, 2 potions of cure light wounds.

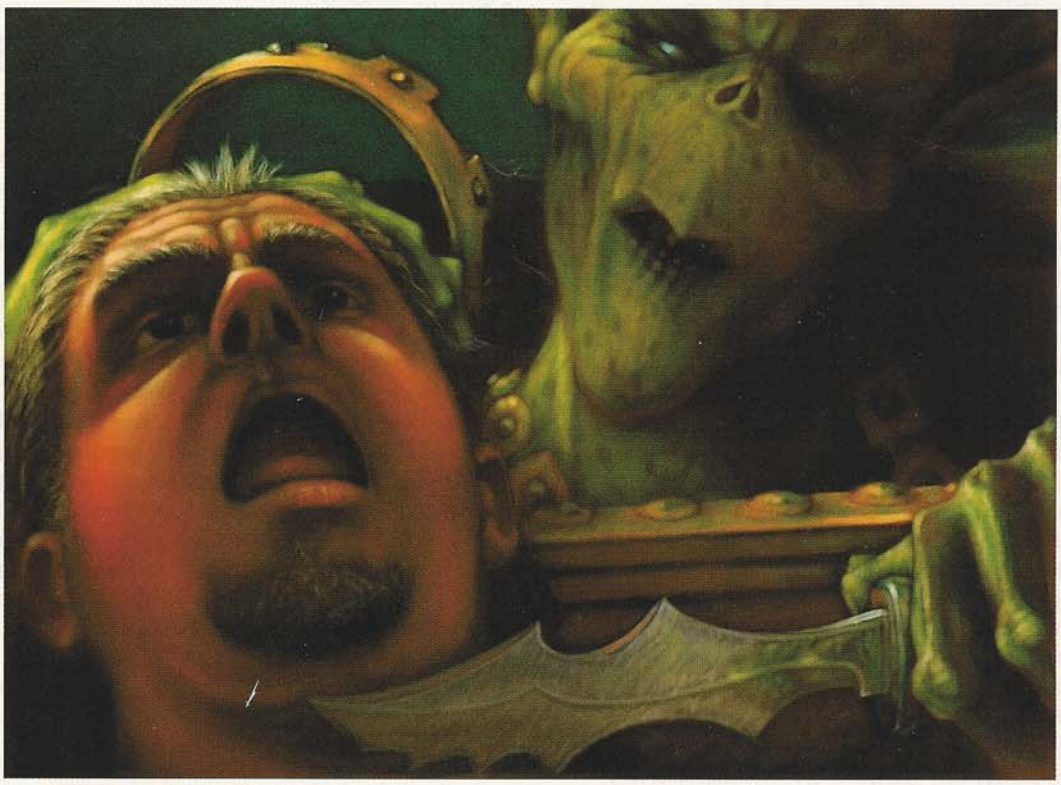
the army size based on the challenge you want to present to the PCs.

Battle in the Background: Construct several encounters for the PCs within the context of the raging battle. For example, the characters might have to lead an elite unit made up of PCs, cohorts, followers, and friends in a charge on the enemy's leaders, or a sortie against githyanki units surrounding a beleaguered friendly force. The battlefield missions you choose should force the PCs to face a high-level githyanki knight and his dragon mount, possibly in aerial combat, since no other force on the battlefield would dare stand before them. It might also be fun to let the characters simply wade through the ranks of low-level githyanki for a few minutes, perhaps engaging in a friendly contest to see who can claim the most kills.

Effect on the Invasion: As in the rest of the campaign, the success of the PCs in their specific missions determines the success of their armies. If the characters find themselves limping weakly back to safety after battle, then their army takes heavy casualties and is forced to retreat. If the PCs win but take heavy losses, so do their armies.

The PCs as the Lich-Queen's Ultimate Foes

If the githyanki invasion is actually centered around a more mysterious purpose than simple world domination (such as locating and destroying a divine corpse or a purported tomb of Gith), the PCs could come into conflict with the powerful githyanki agents who are pursuing the lich-queen's actual goal. An adventure of this kind should be fraught with danger and filled with mystery. In both of the situations mentioned, the githyanki are trying to destroy not only a physical object but also the truth that object represents—the ancient and abandoned religion of the githyanki, or the demise of Gith,



THE LICH-QUEEN'S FAVORED (EL 20)

The lich-queen's three minions are a knight (Fighter 7/Blackguard 9), an assassin (Rogue 6/Assassin 10), and a necromancer (Sorcerer 6/Blackweave Warlock 10). The blackweave warlock prestige class is detailed in "Knights of the Lich-Queen," in the *Polyhedron* side of *Dungeon* #100, but the statistics below include all the information necessary to run this NPC.

Fashtar, Githyanki Knight: Male githyanki Fighter 7/Blackguard 9; CR 17; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 7d10+21 plus 9d10+27; hp 136; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. in *+3 full plate armor;* base 30 ft.; AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +16; Grp +21; Atk +24 melee (2d6+11/19-20, *+2 unholy silver sword*); Full Atk +24/+19/+14/+9 melee (2d6+11/19-20, *+2 unholy silver sword*); SA command undead 5/day, poison use, *psionics,* smite good 2/day, sneak attack +2d6; SQ aura of despair, aura of evil, dark blessing, darkvision 60 ft., *detect good,* spell resistance 21; AL NE; SV Fort +16, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Hide +0, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (religion) +2, Ride +4; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (silver sword), Improved Sunder, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Nightmare Steed, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Weapon Focus (silver sword), Weapon Specialization (silver sword).

Command Undead (Su): Fashtar can rebuke or command undead as a 7th-level evil cleric.

Poison Use (Ex): Fashtar can use poison with no risk of poisoning himself.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 12), *dimension door* (DC 16), *mage hand, telekinesis* (DC 17); 1/day—*plane shift* (DC 19). Caster level 16th.

Smite Good (Su): Twice per day, Fashtar may attempt to smite good with one normal melee attack. He adds +2 to his attack roll and deals 9 extra points of damage. If he accidentally smites a creature that is not good, the smite has no effect but is still used up.

Aura of Despair (Su): Every enemy within 10 feet of Fashtar takes a -2 morale penalty on all saving throws.

Aura of Evil (Su): Fashtar's aura of evil is strong (9).

Dark Blessing (Su): Fashtar gains a bonus on all saving throws equal to his Charisma modifier (already figured into the statistics above).

Detect Good (Sp): Fashtar can use *detect good,* as the spell, at will.

Blackguard Spells Prepared (3/2; save DC 11 + spell level): 1st—*cause fear, cure light wounds, doom;* 2nd—*cure moderate wounds, death knell.*

Possessions: +3 full plate armor, +2 unholy silver sword, ring of protection +2, gauntlets of ogre power +2, periapt of Wisdom +2.

Sukh'an: Female githyanki Rogue 6/Assassin 10; CR 17; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 6d6+18 plus 10d6+30; hp 104; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +11; Grp +12; Atk +18 melee (1d6+3 plus wounding/18-20, *+2 wounding rapier*); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d6+3 plus wounding/18-20, *+2 wounding rapier*) and +11/+6 melee (1d4+1 plus poison/19-20, *dagger of venom*); SA death attack, *psionics,* sneak attack +8d6, spells; SQ +5 save against poison, darkvision 60 ft., evasion, hide in plain sight, improved uncanny dodge, poison use, spell resistance 21, trap sense +2, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +20, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +27, Climb +10, Disguise +18, Gather Information +8, Hide +32, Intimidate +18, Jump +3, Listen +9, Move Silently +32, Spot +9, Tumble +25; Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Stealthy, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier).

Death Attack (Ex): After studying her victim for 3 rounds, Sukh'an can paralyze or kill the target with a successful melee attack unless it makes a successful Fortitude save (DC 22).

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 9), *dimension door* (DC 13), *mage hand, telekinesis* (DC 14); 1/day—*plane shift* (DC 16). Caster level 16th.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Sukh'an takes no damage on a successful saving throw.

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): Sukh'an can use the Hide skill even while being observed. As long as she is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow, she can hide herself from view in the open without having anything to actually hide behind. She cannot, however, hide in her own shadow.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Sukh'an can't be flanked, except by a rogue of at least 20th level.

Poison Use (Ex): Sukh'an can use poison with no risk of poisoning herself.

Trap Sense (Ex): Sukh'an gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves against traps and a +2 bonus to AC against attacks by traps.

Trapfinding (Ex): Sukh'an can use Search to find any trap with a Search DC higher than 20. She can also use Disable Device to disarm magic traps and can bypass a trap without disabling it by beating its Disable Device DC by 10 or more.

Uncanny Dodge: Sukh'an retains her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class even when flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

Assassin Spells Known (4/4/3/3; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st—*disguise self, jump, sleep, true strike;* 2nd—*alter self, cat's grace, illusory script, pass without trace;* 3rd—*deep slumber, deeper darkness, misdirection, nondetection;* 4th—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, freedom of movement, greater invisibility, poison.*

Possessions: +3 shadow studded leather armor, +2 wounding rapier, dagger of venom, gloves of Dexterity +4, cloak of resistance +2, boots of elvenkind, potion of cure moderate wounds.

Khosuvh: Male githyanki Sorcerer 6/Blackweave Warlock 10; CR 17; Medium Humanoid (extraplanar); HD 6d4+18 plus 10d4+30; hp 99; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +10; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee touch (2 negative levels, touch); Full Atk +10/+5 melee touch (2 negative levels, touch) or +13 ranged touch (by spell, ranged touch spell); SA death touch, energy drain, *psionics,* spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., death ward; spell resistance 21; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +12; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Spellcraft +11; Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (Necromancy), Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (Necromancy), Weapon Focus (touch).

Death Touch (Su): With a successful melee touch attack, Khosuvh rolls 20d6; if the total at least equals the target's current hit points, it dies. This ability is a death effect.

Energy Drain (Su): Khosuvh's touch bestows two negative levels. The Fortitude save to remove the negative levels has a DC of 25.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day—*blur, daze* (DC 15), *dimension door* (DC 19), *mage hand, telekinesis* (DC 20); 1/day—*plane shift* (DC 22). Caster level 16th.

Death Ward (Su): Khosuvh is immune to negative energy and death attacks, as if constantly protected by a *death ward* spell.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/11/9/9/8/6/2; save DC 15 + spell level, or 17 + spell level for Necromancy spells): 0—*acid splash, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, ghost sound, mage hand, touch of fatigue;* 1st—*chill touch, disguise self, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, true strike;* 2nd—*blindness/deafness, false life, scorching ray, see invisibility, spectral hand;* 3rd—*haste, lightning bolt, ray of exhaustion, vampiric touch;* 4th—*bestow curse, contagion, enervation, fear;* 5th—*blight, cone of cold, hold monster, waves of fatigue;* 6th—*circle of death, eyebite.* Caster level for Necromancy spells is 18th, for other spells is 6th.

Possessions: Staff of necromancy, ring of protection +2, cloak of Charisma +2.

respectively. The site that the githyanki seek must be ancient almost beyond legend and saturated with magical power.

Effects on the Invasion: Discovering the ultimate truth behind the invasion might give the PCs an edge over the githyanki, or it might simply enlighten them further about the nature of their enemies. If the site that the githyanki seek is infused with some kind of ancient power or magic, the PCs might be able to harness those forces themselves, gaining an additional source of power against their foes. If the PCs succeed in thwarting the lich-queen's efforts toward this goal, she might delay her advances into new territories or divert resources toward achieving her ultimate purpose.

Levels 16 to 18

The Incursion campaign should be drawing toward its conclusion as the PCs reach this level of power. By this time, the characters should be facing the most powerful agents of the lich-queen, including high-level githyanki knights astride fiendish red dragon mounts, well-trained strike teams of high-level githyanki assassins, and powerful monsters, such as the B'kallash dreadnought (a draconic variant of the astral dreadnought described in *Manual of the Planes,* fully detailed in DUNGEON #100).

Agents of the Lich-Queen

The lich-queen has certainly identified the PCs as a force to be dealt with by now, and she spares no effort (short of attacking them personally) to destroy them so that she can carry on with her business of conquest. Of course, she has far fewer 16th-level servants at her command than she has faceless githwarriors, and she is very careful about committing her most valued resources. (Besides their strategic value, her 16th-level servants are very close to becoming sustenance for her eternal unlife, and she hates to waste power.) To that end, she assigns three of her most valued minions to hunt down the PCs, giving them permission to retreat from a losing fight, if necessary, in order to plan a more advantageous assault. These minions stalk the PCs for some time, skirmishing with them on a regular basis but always leaving themselves an avenue of escape. If one of the three is killed, the other two use *dimension door* to retreat with the body, then procure a *raise dead* spell to bring their fallen comrade back. See the Lich-Queen's Favored sidebar for statistics for these githyanki.

To the Astral Plane

At the same time that the githyanki agents are hunting the PCs, the characters might be getting ready to take the fight to the lich-queen herself. Initially, they might focus their attention on the generals of the githyanki armies and the lich-queen's puppet king in Krr'a'gith'farak, all of whom are knights with statistics equivalent to those of Fashtar (see The Lich-Queen's Favored sidebar). Eventually, however, they can make their way to the Astral Plane and confront the lich-queen herself (see "The Lich-Queen's Beloved" in DUNGEON #100 for details of this scenario.)

Effects on the Invasion: If the characters succeed in breaking the *Scepter of Ephelomon* (see "The Lich-Queen's Beloved" in DUNGEON #100), the githyanki pact with red dragons comes to an abrupt end, significantly aiding the war effort back on the Material Plane. Similarly, killing the lich-queen robs the githyanki of their ability to use *plane shift,* thereby preventing a planar retreat as the tide of battle turns against them. Completing this adventure provides a suitably climactic ending for the Incursion campaign.

Fighting the Githyanki

Flying ships, swarming dragons, and psionic githyanki knights present a terrifying picture for the sentient creatures of your campaign world. Initially, the natives are certain to greet the invasion with sheer terror, and they will probably lose many of the first battles simply because they aren't prepared for the threat they face.

As the Incursion campaign progresses, however, the natives—particularly the PCs—should grow more accustomed to the githyanki and more knowledgeable about their strengths, weaknesses, and habits. Once the player characters realize that they are facing a full-scale invasion, not just a couple of random githyanki encounters, they're likely to start developing specialized tactics and techniques to fight githyanki. If shared with NPC forces, such techniques could help your world's defenders repel the invaders and significantly reduce the power of the githyanki across the planes.

Responding to the Invasion

Different kingdoms are likely to respond in different ways as the githyanki invasion progresses. One might take a leadership role and rally other nations to a joint defense; another might try to ally with the githyanki in hopes of claiming a share of the spoils. In no case, however, should any kingdom willingly allow a hostile power to cross its borders and seize control of its lands. Even if the githyanki target an utterly corrupt and evil empire, the defending forces should fight hard to protect their nation and their sovereignty.

Whether or not a kingdom calls for help from allies depends on its nature and the history of its relations with neighboring kingdoms. A realm that has traditionally been isolationist or hostile to its neighbors is not likely to change its ways suddenly and cry for help. Even if its leaders did implore other realms to lend assistance, it is unlikely that anyone would rally to its defense. On the other hand, a generally good kingdom that maintains mutually supportive relations with its neighbors would certainly ask for aid and most likely receive it. A kingdom of this sort might serve as the nexus of a coalition army formed to drive off the invaders, particularly after it becomes clear that the githyanki are not going to stop with the conquest of just one kingdom.

The most likely candidate for craven opportunism, on the other hand, would be a strong and very militaristic realm that has had ambitions of conquest for a long time but has never quite been able to best its neighbors on the battlefield. Hoping to defeat their foes at last, such a kingdom's leaders would probably seek to ally with the githyanki just long enough to achieve some important short-term objectives, then turn on the invaders and try to wrest control of the whole world from them. A smaller nation leaning toward evil might seek a similar alliance simply to avoid being destroyed in the invasion. Unfortunately for kingdoms such as these, the githyanki are not interested in allies and rebuff all offers of cooperation from kingdoms large and small. Their motto, "Go forth and conquer all," does not allow for other powers to share dominion with the githyanki empire.

Traitors, however, are another matter. In general, individuals who offer to betray their homelands for personal gain have no interest in sharing power and dominion—they just want wealth. The githyanki have no problem with enriching a single individual who will end up living as a subject in a githyanki empire, so they are happy to make agreements with traitors. In fact, each time they begin marching toward a new military target, they send spies ahead to let the criminals and malcontents of the target kingdom know that quislings will be richly rewarded.

Unlikely Allies

As the invasion progresses and the scope of the githyanki threat becomes apparent, even kingdoms that have traditionally been hostile to one other might be forced to band together. Such alliances are often so unusual as to be unthinkable under normal circumstances.

Creating unlikely alliances within the Incursion campaign provides an excellent opportunity for players to play monstrous characters, using the guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and the *Monster Manual*, or the more extensive rules in *Savage Species*. Whether a player wants to adopt the role of a minotaur or a mind flayer, a goblin or a githzerai, an unusual character of any kind can fit readily into the campaign when heroes from all races join together against a common foe.

Humanoids/Monstrous Humanoids: Alliances between humans and other humanoids or monstrous humanoids are the easiest to arrange, even though ideological differences might run deep. If the hillside holdings of a hobgoblin tribe are in the path of an army of marching githyanki footsoldiers, the hobgoblins might flee toward a neighboring human kingdom. Although their initial intent could well be to overrun and seize the human lands, canny PCs might be able to persuade the hobgoblins to join forces with the humans. Negotiating the terms of such an alliance could be a fascinating exercise for PCs of any level, requiring more diplomacy than martial prowess—although the hobgoblins might require a convincing display of the latter (perhaps single combat with a hobgoblin champion) before agreeing to help a race they consider weak. Any settlement of humanoids or monstrous humanoids—an orc or goblinoid tribe, a nest of minotaurs, a colony of lizardfolk, an evil theocracy, or a coalition of barbarian tribes—could potentially be recruited as an ally in like manner.

Illithids: If the githyanki penetrate into subterranean realms to strike at their ancient nemeses, the mind flayers, humans and illithids could end up fighting side-by-side to drive off the invaders. Diplomacy involving the arrogant and alien mind flayers tends to be even more complicated than negotiating with minotaurs, but agreements are not impossible to achieve. Because the initial threat to surface lands might be limited to spots where the githyanki seek to gain access to the illithid cavern-cities, the real diplomatic trick might be convincing humans and other surface-dwellers that they should care at all about the invasion.

The illithids' contribution to the alliance forces consists primarily of hordes of grimlocks and other thralls under the command of a relatively small number of mind flayers. The chain of command in the resulting mixed army is likely to be murky, since even under the best of circumstances, mind flayers have a hard time treating humans and other surface-dwellers as equals—or indeed, as anything but thralls. An illithid is likely to respond to any conflict with a human commander with an attempt at domination, even if the terms of the alliance make the human its superior officer. Maintaining peace among such unlikely allies could become an adventure in itself.

Githzerai: Another race of planar interlopers—the githzerai—could also become allies in the war against the githyanki. A group of PCs might travel to the Ever-Changing Chaos of Limbo to seek the aid of the githzerai, or the latter might interfere on their own in order to prevent their hated foes from gaining any foothold on the Material Plane.

The githzerai need very little excuse to fight githyanki, but characters hoping for endless lines of githzerai soldiers are sure to be disappointed. The githzerai are accustomed to small skirmishes with the githyanki, and while their number might be great overall, they prefer to send guerrilla units to harry their enemies.

Defensive Tactics

For all their fearsome power on the battlefield, the githyanki are not without weaknesses. Thus, experience in fighting them should lead quickly to the development of particularly effective tactics and maneuvers.

A githyanki warrior looks upon combat as an opportunity to prove his aptitude for battle. In a githwarrior's mind, even a mass battle is nothing more than a series of personal, one-on-one contests, each of which offers an opportunity to display the excellence of his technique and the speed of his blade. A line of githwarriors might look like a regimented unit, but as soon as it meets the enemy, it dissolves into individuals, each fighting alone and with a different combat style. As a result, githyanki tend to be susceptible to well-synchronized attacks from opponents accustomed to working closely together.

One of greatest strengths of a githyanki army is its mobility. Dragon-mounted knights, flying astral ships, and the *dimension door* ability that all higher-level githyanki share allow githyanki forces to choose and dominate their battlefields. A mere 6th-level sergeant can take two other soldiers with him when he uses *dimension door*, and a higher-level officer can carry even more soldiers along. With such mobility available, a githyanki force can split in half in the blink of an eye to flank an opposing force.

Obviously then, finding ways to negate the githyanki's mobility is a key tactical consideration in fighting them. Using airborne cavalry—even lowly hippogriff riders—to distract the knights on their dragon steeds can be a very effective tactic. If nothing else, this maneuver forces the dragons to fight in the air instead of strafing ground troops with their breath weapons. Astral ships can be commandeered from githyanki forces for use against them, or the *spines of earthly wind* that control them can be severed with some effort. Sadly, the sight of a flying ship plummeting to the ground would have little impact on the morale of a githyanki army, but it is guaranteed to lift the spirits of the opposition forces.

The *dimension door* ability presents a serious conundrum. The best tactic to protect against teleporting githyanki is to avoid committing too many forces to the front lines of a fight, lest the githyanki use *dimension door* to attack a less well-defended area. On the other hand, if an army spreads its forces too thin in an attempt to maintain an equally strong defense everywhere, the githyanki need not use their *dimension door* ability at all—they can remain in a single body and push through the thinly-spread defenders with ease. The best solution is the liberal use of magic—particularly spells such as *dimensional anchor* and *dimensional lock*, if they are available. Wise defenders might also wish to build strong fortifications along a kingdom's borders and at key strategic points, so that a small group of soldiers can defend any location that the githyanki choose to attack. Keeping a strong but very mobile force ready to move anywhere in the kingdom that githyanki appear is also vital for a good defense. Finally, defending armies should march and fight in close formation to prevent the githyanki from appearing in the spaces between soldiers.

One truly radical (but possibly quite effective) tactic is to disband the army entirely. The experienced veterans can then be sent out to train and equip militias in every region. With this technique, the entire kingdom can be trained to fight the githyanki, instead of leaving the common defense in the hands of a few professional warriors stationed at key strategic locations. Not only can a huge national militia help to close the gap in numbers between the swarming githyanki and the defenders, but it can also wage an effective, large-scale guerrilla war against the invaders. In such a situation, the prospect of conquering the kingdom and suppressing all resistance might simply be too costly for the githyanki to consider.

VS. Githyanki

"In the end, they're just humanoids. Psionic, fanatic, sometimes even lunatic—but still just humanoids, just a touch away from death."
—Sanaril, cleric of Wee Jas

Battlefield strategy is one thing, but toe-to-toe tactics can be something else entirely. For a player character in the Incursion campaign, success or failure depends on feats chosen, magic used, and the ability to think quicker than the fiendishly clever githyanki.

Preparation

Once it becomes clear that githyanki are going to be the PCs' primary foes, you can start making choices that will maximize your character's effectiveness against them. These choices should focus primarily on negating the advantages that githyanki gain from their spell-like abilities and racial special qualities, since those are among the few attributes that all githyanki share. Otherwise, these astral invaders are fully as diverse as humans.

The two greatest assets that low-level githyanki can bring to bear against PCs are their *daze* spell-like ability and their innate spell resistance. Iron Will is not a bad feat choice for any character who expects to fight githyanki—not only does it provide some protection from *daze* at low levels, but it can also help protect against certain applications of the *telekinesis* spell at higher levels. Spell Penetration is almost a necessity for any spellcaster who faces a lot of githyanki, since a failed spell is a wasted spell. Since the individual members of any githyanki group the characters meet are likely to be lower in level than the PCs, a party spellcaster already has better than a 50% chance to affect a given foe with a spell. When the stakes are high, however, every spell has to count, so minimizing the risk of failure with Spell Penetration (and Greater Spell Penetration) is always a good idea.

As 3rd-level characters, githyanki gain the ability to use *blur* as a spell-like ability. A miss chance is better than any AC bonus, since even an opponent with a tremendously high bonus on attack rolls can miss—in fact, even a roll of natural 20 can miss. The best way to fight githyanki using *blur* is with the Blind-Fight feat, since it allows you to reroll that annoying miss chance.

As your character rises higher in level, two things are likely to happen: There will be more and more githyanki to fight, and you'll start really hating them when they use *dimension door* to move around the battlefield and *telekinesis* to grapple your character from hundreds of feet away. Spells such as *dimensional anchor* and *dimensional lock* can help to mitigate the *dimension door* problem. The best way to deal with the *telekinesis* effect, however, is to be extremely strong—stronger than most githyanki are smart. A high Strength score helps with all the combat maneuvers that *telekinesis* can be used for, but most githyanki use *telekinesis* to grapple as well as the best fighters can. They often use this ability to pin down spellcasters, since a spellcaster's grapple modifier can't usually compare with that of a githyanki using *telekinesis*. Ranks in Escape Artist, although they don't come cheap to the characters most likely to need them, often represent a more practical solution than increasing the Strength score. Characters who can do so might also want to keep a *dimension door* or *teleport* effect available at a moment's notice. Finally, the Resist Telekinesis feat described below can be a tremendous benefit to higher-level characters who fight a lot of githyanki, even though its use is highly specialized.

Tactics

Once your party joins battle with a group of githyanki, you can finally put your characters' preparation into practice. The following tactics can be used to good effect against githyanki foes.

1. **Know Your Enemy.** In this case, knowing your enemy primarily means knowing how many githyanki you're fighting and where they are. Githyanki like to spread out for a fight—particularly at higher levels, when they can really master the battlefield with their

dimension door abilities. One or two githyanki often remain at a distance, using long-range spells (and *telekinesis*, if they have it) to damage or incapacitate enemy spellcasters. In any encounter, it pays to remember that the githyanki your characters see are probably not the only ones they have to fight. A character with a high Spot bonus should take a round to look carefully around the battlefield, especially if magical effects seem to be coming out of nowhere. If you have a character with a high speed (particularly one who can fly), a circuit of the battlefield can also do a lot of good.

2. Cooperate. Flank their warriors and sneak attack them, use the aid another action when it makes sense to do so, and fight back-to-back so they can't flank you. Such tactics won't gain you any greater mechanical advantage against githyanki than they would against any other foe, but the morale advantage can be tremendous. The githyanki are strong individualists, and they like to flaunt their personal combat styles on the battlefield by fighting independently of one another. They much prefer their enemies to meet them as if the battle were a multitude of single combats—each one a little duel of honor. Thus, well-coordinated attacks can shake them up severely. For example, if a fighter and a rogue team up to take down one githwarrior after another, the remaining githyanki are not likely to stick around long enough to meet the same grisly end.

3. Don't Let Them Get Away! Here's that mobility thing again. Whether it's *dimension door* or dragon riding, the githyanki like to fight when they have the advantage of superior movement capability. Use *dimensional anchor* to nail them down, use flying mounts of your own to meet their knights in the air, or—if all else fails—try to lure them into a tight space where they can't use their mobility to best advantage.

HELPFUL GITHYANKI FIGHTING TIPS

- Don't get dazed! Your Will save is your friend.
- Don't waste your spells! Spell Penetration saves lives.
- Don't miss! Learn the Blind-Fight feat.
- Don't get grabbed! Learn to resist telekinesis.
- Hold them still! Learn to counter dimension door.
- Know your foe! Watch out for the ones hanging back.
- Work together! At worst, you'll shake them up a little.

Feats and Magic

Defending forces might develop some of the following feats and magic items during the course of the Incursion campaign as they learn better ways to combat the githyanki armies. These new options are available to PCs purely at the DM's discretion, and the DM should feel free to impose restrictions or additional prerequisites as appropriate for the campaign and the situation. For example, PCs might be required to undergo special training to learn any of the feats presented here, or magic weapons that utilize the new properties described might be available only to PCs who can make them.

New Feats

The following new feats fall into the General category and are available to any character who meets the prerequisites.

Anti-Psionic Magic [General]

Your spells work better against psionics and psionic creatures than they normally would.

Prerequisite: Spellcraft 5 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you cast a spell that would affect a creature with psionic power resistance, you get a +2 bonus on your level check to overcome that power resistance. This bonus stacks with that gained from the Spell Penetration or Greater Spell Penetration feat, but it applies only to checks made to overcome psionic power resistance, not spell resistance. Furthermore, when a psionic creature tries to dispel one of your

FEAT SUMMARY

FEAT NAME	PREREQUISITES	SUMMARY
Anti-Psionic Magic	Spellcraft 5 ranks	+2 bonus on level check against psionic power resistance; your spells are hard to negate psionically
Astral Tracking	Knowledge (the planes) 11 ranks, Spellcraft 8 ranks, Survival 10 ranks, Track	Track across Astral Plane (base DC 25); follow teleporting creatures
Close-Quarter Defense	Combat Reflexes	+2 bonus on attack rolls for certain attacks of opportunity
Double Weapon Disarm	Int 13, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm	+4 bonus on opposed attack roll when disarming an opponent with a double weapon
Improved Shield Snare	Combat Reflexes, Improved Shield Bash, Shield Proficiency, Shield Snare	Make an attack of opportunity when you disarm an opponent with your shield; gain a +2 bonus on subsequent attacks
Mighty Are Fallen	Dex 13, Int 13, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility	+4 bonus to AC when opponent uses Power Attack
Resist Telekinesis	Int 13, Spellcraft 2 ranks, Combat Expertise	+8 bonus on opposed attack rolls against *telekinesis* combat maneuvers, +4 bonus on saves against violent thrust
Shield Snare	Improved Shield Bash, Shield Proficiency	Ready an action to disarm an opponent with your shield

spells with a psionic ability (such as *negate psionics*), the DC is 13 + your caster level.

Normal: Psionics and magic work the same in most campaigns, and both forms of resistance (psionic power resistance and spell resistance) protect against both kinds of effects. In the same manner, *dispel magic* can dispel psionics as well as magic, and *negate psionics* can remove spells as well as psionic effects. A character with this feat bends that general rule without breaking it, by reducing the effectiveness of psionics against spells.

Astral Tracking [General]

You can follow tracks across the featureless wastes of the Astral Plane. In addition, you can try to determine the destination of a creature that has used a *teleport* spell or effect.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (the planes) 11 ranks, Spellcraft 8 ranks, Survival 10 ranks, Track.

Benefit: You can attempt to track a creature normally, even through the featureless wastes of the Astral Plane (base Survival DC 25). In addition, when standing at the location (on any plane) from which a creature departed by means of a *teleportation* spell or effect, you can determine its destination with a successful Survival check (DC 30). If you have your own means of teleportation, you can then teleport to that location as though you had viewed it once.

Close-Quarter Defense [General]

You are unusually effective at defending your space.

Prerequisite: Combat Reflexes.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on your attack roll for any attack of opportunity that an opponent has provoked by moving into your space. The benefit also applies for attacks of opportunity provoked by the opponent making an unarmed attack, attempting to start a grapple, bull rushing you, sundering your weapon or shield, or trying to sever your silver cord with a *silver sword.*

If the opponent has a feat that would normally prevent you from making an attack of opportunity in the given circumstance, you can still attempt one by virtue of this feat. However, instead of gaining a +2 bonus on the attack roll, you take a -10 penalty.

Special: A fighter can take Close-Quarter Defense as one of her bonus feats.

Double Weapon Disarm [General]

You are practiced at disarming opponents that wield double weapons.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an opponent that is wielding a double weapon. This bonus stacks with the one granted by the Improved Disarm feat.

Special: A fighter can take Double Weapon Disarm as one of his bonus feats.

Improved Shield Snare [General]

You can follow up on a shield snare with deadly attacks upon your opponent.

Prerequisites: Combat Reflexes, Improved Shield Bash, Shield Proficiency, Shield Snare.

Benefit: When you disarm a foe with the Shield Snare feat, you can make an attack of opportunity against that opponent on the same round. Thereafter, you gain a +2 bonus on each attack roll you subsequently make against that opponent, as long as the opponent remains disarmed.

Special: A fighter can take Improved Shield Snare as one of her bonus feats.

Mighty Are Fallen [General]

You can sidestep the powerful swings of an opponent that is using Power Attack.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Int 13, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to your AC against any blow enhanced by the Power Attack feat.

Special: A fighter can take Mighty Are Fallen as one of his bonus feats.

Resist Telekinesis [General]

You are adept at avoiding the combat maneuvers practiced by spellcasters using *telekinesis.*

Prerequisites: Int 13, Spellcraft 2 ranks, Combat Expertise.

Benefit: When an opponent uses *telekinesis* to perform a combat maneuver (such as bull rush, disarm, grapple, or trip) against you, you gain a +8 bonus on your opposed roll to resist the effect. You also gain a +4 bonus on your Will save to avoid being hurled by a telekinetic violent thrust.

Shield Snare [General]

You can disarm an opponent with your shield.

Prerequisites: Improved Shield Bash, Shield Proficiency.

Benefit: You can use your shield to disarm an opponent. To do so, you must first ready an action, specifying a melee attack by a particular opponent as the trigger for it. When that opponent attacks, make a disarm attempt using your shield as your weapon. For the purpose of this attack, a buckler is considered a light weapon, a light shield is considered a one-handed weapon, and a heavy or tower shield is considered a two-handed weapon. If you beat your opponent's attack roll, you snare the weapon and jerk it from the opponent's grasp. Your disarm attempt does not provoke an attack of opportunity, and the opponent cannot attempt to disarm you if you fail. Whenever you attempt to snare an opponent's weapon, you lose your shield bonus to AC until the beginning of your next turn.

Special: A fighter can take Shield Snare as one of her bonus feats.

New Weapon Properties

The following weapon properties can be applied to melee or ranged weapons.

PROPERTY	MARKET PRICE
Anchoring	+11,200 gp
Greater Anchoring	+80,000 gp

Anchoring: Once per day, the wielder of a weapon with this property may use a *dimensional anchor* effect as a free action against a creature struck by it. The wielder can decide to use the power after striking a successful blow, but it must be used on the same round that the weapon strikes. The *dimensional anchor* effect lasts for 1 minute.

Moderate Abjuration; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *dimensional anchor;* Price +11,200 gp.

Greater Anchoring: A weapon with this property is identical to one with the anchoring property, except that there is no limit to the use of the *dimensional anchor* ability, and the effect lasts for 10 minutes.

Strong Abjuration; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *dimensional anchor;* Price + 80,000 gp. D